OBSTACLES TO INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) IN PRIMARY MAINSTREAM GIRLS SCHOOLS IN THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA (KSA) FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

by

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A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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[April] 2018

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to give voice to teachers to identify obstacles to the inclusion of students with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream primary girls schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). Specific aspects of focus included the inclusive culture of the school, the staff professional development, the parents' involvement and collaboration with schools and finally, interactions of typically developing peers with students with SEN.

A mixed methods approach was utilised, combining both questionnaires and interviews as data collection tools. The mixed method followed a convergent parallel design in which the quantitative and qualitative data were collected at approximately the same time, but analysed separately, before final interpretation. The research sample consisted of primary special education teachers who currently practise inclusion in mainstreams girls schools in KSA's five main districts. Five hundred teachers were invited to complete the questionnaire portion of the research, with 331 responses. For the interview part, a total of 11 teachers were interviewed.

Whilst some positive findings were reported, indicating some progression in the inclusive education in KSA, a number of obstacles in each of the four aspects were reported by special education teachers to be hindering the inclusion of students with SEN. Teachers reported a lack of a comprehensive understanding of inclusion, unsupportive school leadership, and ineffective collaborative relationships between teachers, discriminatory language and practice within the schools, inaccessible physical environments, and insufficient resources. In the aspect of professional development and availability of specialist support, teachers reported a lack of training of school's staff, the mismatch between pre-service training and the realities of actual practice, insufficient special education supervision, as well as a paucity of available specialist human resources in the inclusive schools. Whilst teachers reported that parents of students with SEN with whom they interact are positive about inclusion and prefer to educate their children

in mainstream school rather than in special schools, the teachers perceive that the parents are less interested in becoming involved in, and collaborating with, schools. The research found that this is due to a number of factors, including parental related factors, school related factors and other factors. Positive findings were mostly reported in the aspect of typically developing peers' acceptance and interactions with students with SEN, although a few negative issues were also identified, such as learning inappropriate behaviours and words.

In addition to identifying the obstacles to inclusion for students with SEN, this research incorporates the identified obstacles to inclusion along with implications and practical recommendations, mainly targeting Ministry of Education and Local Education Authorities as they are more likely to be able to give considerable attention to issues of awareness, understanding, knowledge and training for all school staff, and strengthen the relationships between the schools and families.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my father, Fahad, my mother, Ayshah, my husband, Mazen, my brothers, Bandar, Mohammed, and Abdulaziz, my sisters, Albandari, Asma, Abrar, and Bayan. To my friend Entesar Alqurashi.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I, first of all, thank Allah, the Almighty, for giving me the inspiration, patience, time, and strength to finish this work. It is only by His will and mercy that I have been able to achieve all of this.

I also take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the people who have been instrumental in the successful completion of this research. To Dr. Penny Lacy who, although has passed away during the period of her supervision, I offer special thanks. You will continue to inspire through your knowledge, your morals and example, and your dedication to the students.

Dr. Matthew Schuelka and Neil Hall, I cannot say thank you enough for your tremendous support and help. Without your encouragement and guidance, this research would not have materialised.

My mother and father, I am forever indebted for your understanding, endless patience, encouragement, and help when it was most needed. Much of what I have learned over the years came as the result of being a daughter of wonderful and delightful parents such as you. My beloved husband Mazen, I fall short of words to thank you enough. You were always there cheering me up and standing by me so I never stood alone. My brothers and sisters, thank you for inspiring, encouraging, and helping me in your own special ways. Last, but not least, to my friends Entesar and Layla, thank you for your helping hand when I needed it the most.

This thesis was copy edited for conventions of language, spelling and grammar by Dr Luba Atherton.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SEN	Special Educational Needs
LEA	Local Educational Authority
IEP	Individual Educational Plan
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
RSEPI	Roles and Regulations of Special Education Programs and Institutions
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
PLC	Professional Learning Community
IEP	Individual Education Plan
RSES	Residential Special Education Supervisor

TERMINOLOGY

Some of the relevant terminologies applied in this research are defined in the following subsection.

Special Educational Needs Teachers

The term special educational needs teacher is used to refer to teachers who hold special education qualifications to work with students with SEN in KSA. These educators specialise in tailoring, creating and assigning activities and curricula that specifically caters to the needs and abilities of individual students.

Students with Special Educational Needs

In KSA, the term students with special educational needs refers to those who 'are different from their peers in their cognitive, physical, emotional, sensory, behavioural, academic or communicative abilities' (Al-Mousa, 1999, p.41).

Primary Schools

Mainstream primary school refers to the public-sector classrooms that educate the majority of children in the KSA. These schools primarily use a curriculum developed by the state and is implemented nationwide in KSA. More specifically, 'mainstream primary school' is a term that encompasses the first level of education that spans from stages 1 -6 post-kindergarten, with an age range of 6-12 years old (Ministry of Education, 2002).

Inclusion

The term inclusion is used in KSA to pertain to '*educating children with special educational needs in regular education schools, and providing them with special education services*' (Ministry of Education, 2002, p.8).

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Inclusive education has experienced a number of positive educational trends and developments in many different countries, typically by recognising that all students, including those who have special educational needs (SEN), have a right to education. Inclusion of children with SEN in mainstream schools, alongside their peers, has become a major concern for interested educators, professionals and parents in many countries around the world. The reasons for this trend are due to a number of factors such as the increasing attention to the role of education in achieving social justice for pupils with SEN; the right of individuals with SEN to be educated along with their typically developing peers in mainstream schools; the benefit of equal opportunities for everyone in achieving self-growth and participating in building society (Al-Quraini, 2011). In terms of both policy and practice, inclusion has various interpretations. One of those interpretations defines inclusion as based on the belief that students with SEN can and should be educated in the same educational setting with typically developing peers, thus emphasising the importance of providing learning opportunities for all students (Ferguson, 2014).

Many educators believe that inclusive education allows students with SEN to benefit from equal opportunities in achieving their full potential, learning how to participate in various social settings, contributing to their society and gaining acceptance amongst their peer groups (Forlin and Cole, 1993). Increased participation in society challenges the stereotypes and perceptions which might otherwise stigmatise individuals with disabilities (Allan, 2003).

Opponents of inclusion, however, take the argument that inclusive education is detrimental to a child's learning by taking away special and targeted strategies and interventions. They maintain that students with SEN should be taught in special schools that provide specialised and individualised educational services (Hegarty, 2001 Antoinette, 2002). They also argue that inclusion is not always the best way to meet the students' needs and they question whether students with disabilities, especially children with severe educational disabilities, will benefit from inclusion (Imray and Colley, 2017). Critics also argue that inclusion entails the elimination of special educational placements, thus giving no alternative for disabled children's parents, especially if their child is severely disabled (Fuchs and Fuchs, 1998). Another criticism of inclusive settings is the issue of accommodation for all of the children. This accommodation must cater to the fact that students with SEN need additional services and provisions, which may not be readily available in mainstream settings and, even if they are available, they may be costly (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002).

In KSA, the trend is in favour of the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools and therefore, KSA has made changes in its educational provision, with the implementation of the policy of inclusion in mainstream schools as one of its foremost aims. This is based on the principle that education is an essential right for all citizens, with or without SEN, emphasised by the KSA Education Policy Document (2002), which states that the education of people with special educational needs is an integral part of the general education system (Al-Mousa, 2004). Moreover, Saudi's human rights movement has shifted the attention of stakeholders. Where previously SEN services were regarded as voluntary, they are now considered as a fundamental right in line with equal opportunities, self-respect and dignity (Al-Mousa, 2004).

The policy of KSA of Education established a strategic educational plan in 2000, the primary aim of which was for mainstream schools to begin the process of including and educating students with SEN, in addition to expanding these programmes. Since then inclusion has made considerable progress in educating students with SEN, despite its relatively recent introduction in 2000 (Al-Mousa, 2010). The following section will present the research problem under research.

1.2 The Research Problem

Despite recent gains in inclusive education, KSA has a longer history of segregated educational provisions for students with SEN attending special schools than attending inclusion programs in mainstream schools. However, the Ministry of Education has, since 2000, implemented the policy of the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools and classrooms. Given the complexity of this task, there are calls in KSA for further research to reveal the obstacles that have hindered the inclusion or that may do so in the future (Al-Khashrami, 2002).

So far, in KSA, there has been little discussion of these potential challenges, which indicates the importance of conducting a research that focuses primarily on the issues involved when trying to implement inclusion in mainstream schools in KSA effectively (Al-Mousa, 2010). The following section highlights the importance of conducting a research that focuses primarily on identifying obstacles to the implementation of the inclusion of students with SEN, as well as preventing its success, as an alternative to segregated provision.

In response to the gap in the literature in KSA and the calls for further research, this research seeks to identify and examine the obstacles to inclusion of students with SEN in KSA, with reference and comparison to those found in the literature from other national contexts. This research also seeks to contribute to the area of inclusive education through an in-depth analysis of what seems to be hampering the implementation of the inclusion of students with SEN in KSA. This research is important to the field of inclusive education both in KSA and globally, in that it gives teachers a voice in identifying any obstacles they face in promoting the inclusion of students with SEN. Specific aspects of these challenges to inclusion include: the inclusive culture in the schools; teachers' professional development; parents' collaboration and involvement with school; and the interactions of the typically developing peers with students with SEN.

These aspects were identified based on their significance in international literature from a variety of contexts. For example, it was suggested by the research undertaken in other countries that schools where inclusion has been successful share certain factors. These include the inclusive culture of the schools, including premises and space (Prosser and Loxley, 2007; Gaad, 2010), resources, such as human resources (Janney et al., 1995), leadership (McLeskey and Waldron, 2002; Hattie, 2005; Shevlin et al., 2008) and collaborative teamwork (Nutbrown and Clough, 2013). In addition, the availability of professional development, including training (Dickens-Smith, 1995; Avramidis and Kalvya, 2007), knowledge and confidence (Koutrouba et al, 2008; Anderson et al., 2007) and experience (Avramidis et al., 2000), together with support and encouragement from the head teacher (Shevlin et al., 2008) and effective use of support staff (Nutbrown and Clough, 2013) are of the factors that contribute to successful inclusion. Parents' involvement and collaboration with schools has also been identified

as important to establishing and maintaining the necessary degree of collaboration between home and school, which is key in successful inclusion (Elkins et al., 2003; Kalyva et al., 2007; ElZein, 2009; Nutbrown and Clough, 2013). Exploring these factors in the context of KSA – where inclusion is in its relatively early stages – is important to identifying whether these same factors are relevant and appropriate in the context of KSA.

1.3 Rationale of the Research and the Researcher's Positionality

There are a number of different reasons why this research is being undertaken. The first reason is a professional interest in the field of inclusion for students with SEN in mainstream schools, particularly in the context of KSA, where it is relatively new to my country. Secondly, my previous professional experience as a special education teacher in KSA, who has intrinsic familiarity with the culture and context of the research. Through discussions with teachers who are practising inclusion, as well as my personal experience as a special education teacher in a mainstream school, I identified that there are a number of obstacles to the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream classrooms in KSA. This motivated me to undertake a postgraduate degree on inclusion and SEN.

During my investigation of inclusion in different international contexts, both prior to and during my postgraduate studies, I found certain factors shared by schools that have successful experiences in inclusive education (see section 1.2). This shaped my professional interest in the field of inclusion for students with SEN in mainstream schools, particularly in terms of the obstacles to inclusion in the specific context of KSA, which is a relatively new topic. Given that the lived experience of female special

education teachers is a direct result of the practical application of policies currently in place, I decided to focus on their specific perspectives and insights regarding the challenges hindering the inclusion of students with SEN. Although, this might raise the issue of objectivity and validity, however, some scholars argue that it is impossible to completely separate research from values, with researchers inevitably playing a crucial role in data analysis and interpretation (Denscombe, 2014; Bryman, 2015).

This research examined obstacles to inclusion and its implementation from the perspective of special education teachers. Since their lived experience is a direct result of the practical application of policies currently in place, their voice and perception on what obstacles they face and what they believe are hindering inclusion of students with SEN is important for the Saudi Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, 2002). Therefore, the outcomes of this research can contribute to drawing the attention of policy stakeholders to the nature of these problems and thus help them to take effective decisions and draw up the appropriate policy to address and overcome these problems.

In addition, choosing to research female participants is because, much of the existing research in relation to inclusion in Saudi Arabia's schools has dealt primarily with male subjects (Al- Salloom, 1999). Female teachers are often overlooked in research, despite the fact that 52% of teachers in Saudi Arabia are female (OECD, 2016). Therefore, investigating the understudied population of female teachers will bridge the gap existing in the KSA literature (further details about the original contributions of this research is presented in the Conclusion Chapter, section 8.5). The educational stage that has been chosen is that of primary schools. The reason for this choice is because it represents the basis and foundation of a child's education and has been identified as significantly important in preparing them for the initial stages of their lives. Primary

school is very important for the development and refinement of children's personalities through their interactions with their social environment (Ministry of Education, 2001). In primary education, the student learns how to interact socially and learn academically, gaining a wide range of important knowledge, values and principles. In addition, teacher-student relationships, at this stage of children's lives, are vital as they allow the close observation of the child's behaviour, individual characteristics, learning development and interests (Al-Mousa, 2010).

1.4 Aims of the Research

This research seeks to identify the key obstacles to inclusion of students of SEN from the point of view of special education teachers. The research also seeks to identify the significance of variables of the geographical location of the participants. This is of an importance to this research because it could discover whether or not there are significant differences between different districts in the country and what could be the reasons for these differences. There is also a focus on considering the steps required for improvement in inclusive education. The results obtained from this research are expected to help the Ministry of Education in obtaining up-to-date information regarding obstacles affecting inclusion of children with SEN in primary mainstream girls schools.

1.5 Research Questions

In order to address these aims, the following research questions are proposed:

1- What are the obstacles facing the inclusion of girls with special educational needs (SEN) in primary mainstream schools in KSA from the perspective of special education teachers in terms of inclusive culture in schools?

2- What are the obstacles facing the inclusion of girls with special educational needs (SEN) in primary mainstream schools in KSA from the perspective of special education teachers in terms of the provision of professional development of teachers?
3- What are the obstacles facing the inclusion of girls with special educational needs (SEN) in primary mainstream schools in KSA from the perspective of special education teachers in terms of parents of students with SEN collaboration with school in order to promote successful inclusion of their children?
4- What are the obstacles facing the inclusion of girls with special educational needs (SEN) in primary mainstream schools in KSA from the perspective of special education teachers in terms of the interactions of typically developing peers with students with SEN?
5- Do participants' responses differ significantly based on geographical location in terms of the above four aspects?

To facilitate an understanding of how these research questions will be addressed, an overview of the structure of the thesis will follow.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into Eight chapters. Chapter One, this chapter, is the introductory chapter of the research and provided the framework and background of the research, and identified that the lack of research focusing on obstacles to inclusion in KSA female mainstream primary schools. Chapter One also begins to outline the definitions of inclusion, special education teachers, mainstream schools and institutes, as they will be used in the context of this research. Chapter Two explores the research setting that is

the KSA by briefly explaining the country′s explaining the country's population, culture and religion. Chapter Two also includes a discussion of how disability is viewed by Islam, which is the country′s religion in the country and important to understand in all aspects of KSA policy, society, and culture in the country. It also discusses the country's educational system and the nature of special education in KSA with emphasis on the policy and regulations of special education in the Kingdom.

Chapter Three presents various definitions and aspects of inclusion that are pertinent to this research. This chapter traces literature pertaining to inclusive education in different contexts as well as in KSA. It then narrows down the discussion to focus on obstacles to inclusion that were discussed in the literature with regards to schools' inclusive cultures. Chapter Four provides an overview of the methodology for this research and how the research has been designed and implemented. It shows how the research samples were chosen and the number of participants from both mainstream schools and special institutes. The chapter provides a detailed timeline of the research activities and how the research instruments were constructed and pilot tested prior to the final research instruments being administered. The chapter also discusses: research instruments, their distribution and collection; validity, reliability, the data treatment and analysis methods tools utilised for both qualitative and quantitative data, as well as the advantages of the mixed method approach, as used for this research. Finally, the researcher's positionality is also presented.

Chapter Five represents the demographic information and characteristics of the respondents as gathered from the participants' responses and their feedback. It also details the results obtained from questionnaires and provides analysis of the responses of the research participants. Chapter Six, presents the qualitative results of the research,

with a thematic analysis of the participants' interview responses. Chapter Seven discusses the findings of the research in relation to the research questions to ensure a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the research findings with reference to the existing literature. Finally, Chapter Eight brings together the answers to the research questions and examines the implications of the findings of this research, and makes recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: THE RESEARCH SETTING (KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA)

2.1 Introduction

The KSA is located in the Arabian Peninsula, and forms the meeting place of Asia, Europe and Africa and is. The approximate population of the state is 27,500,000 as calculated in 2012 (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2012). Its neighbours include Kuwait, Jordan and Iraq to the North, and Oman and Yemen to the South. The KSA overlooks the Red Sea on its western border, and finds Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates to its Eastern border. Further exemplifying its political, economic and geographic significance, as well as being the largest state in the area, its proximity to the Suez Canal, the Gulf, and its direct access to three different continents has brought KSA to global attention. KSA has also been cited as the historical origin of Islam, home to the holiest shrine known to the religion and the destination for Hajj (pilgrimage) (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2012).

The KSA government system is a monarchy based on Islamic law. The Council of Ministers operates as the bureaucratic arm of the government, dealing with all organisational and administrative matters. This arrangement, as with most elements of Saudi society, is informed by Islam, which dictates the standards by which Saudi life should be lived. These standards pertain to daily interaction, the home and wider communities, as society subscribes to a collection of connected duties prescribed by the Quran. This influence extends to infrastructure and, in particular, education, which is a key tenet of the Quran for both genders.

2.2 Educational System in KSA

Educational policies in KSA a are largely controlled by the government and the administration of education is controlled by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education was established in 1954, and it is the responsible body for the education of all children, including those with special educational needs (Ministry of Education, 2008). In addition to a central Ministry of Education, local educational authorities across the country act as links between the local schools and the central government. The Ministry is responsible for the provision of school buildings, equipment, materials, maintenance and supplies of textbooks. It is also responsible for providing special education services for students with special educational needs in such a way that they are able to practise their activities in the least restrictive environment possible, independently and safely (Ministry of Education, 2008). The Ministry of Education also consists of a number of different administrations, such as the Administration of Management and Finance, the Administration of Planning, the Administration of General Education and the Administration of Special Education (Ministry of Education, 2008). Education in KSA is divided into three stages:

- The primary stage, which lasts 6 years and provides education for children between the ages of six and twelve.
- The secondary stage, which is three years in duration, focus on adolescents between the ages of twelve and fifteen.
- High school, which is three years in duration and provides education for age of fifteen and eighteen.
- Higher Education, which caters for students aged 18 and above, includes undergraduate university level (Bachelor) and postgraduate university level (Masters and PhD) (Ministry of Education, 2008).

2.3 Special Education in KSA

KSA was one of the first Arab countries to include students with SEN in mainstream schools. This has been done by giving children with SEN the same access to educational opportunities as their typically developing peers and considers education of people with SEN as an integral part of the general education system (Al-Mousa, 2004). This section will provide a brief historical overview of special education development in KSA, as well as giving a background to the policy and practices of inclusion in KSA mainstream schools. This will be followed by presenting the targeted group for inclusion, the eligibility assessment for special services and the phases through which inclusion was implemented.

In KSA, unlike many other countries, the education of students with SEN began in informal general settings when both disabled and non-disabled children attended Mosques or community halls, before formal schools were established. However, with the advent of a formal school system in 1960, children with SEN attended segregated schools. The first of these, for students with visual impairments, was the Al-Noor Institute which opened in Riyadh. Following that, in 1946 the Al-Amal institute, the first residential deaf school, was established in Riyadh. Similar projects continue to develop in different part of the country afterwards.

In 1962, a government decision was made to establish the first Administration of Special Education which was tasked with establishing programmes for 'blind, deaf, and mentally retarded' (Al-Mousa, 2010, p.14). The programme resulted in increasing the number of special schools for students with SEN across the country (Al-Mousa, 2010). Following that, in 1946 Al-Amal institution in Riyadh which is the first residential deaf

school was established in Riyadh. Similar projects continue to develop in different parts of the country.

In 1990, the kingdom continued its provision of special services and soon started to implement mainstreaming in its schools but on a limited scale. Between 1996 and 2000, the Ministry of Education developed a strategic educational plan that aimed mainly at activating the role of mainstream schools in including and educating students with special educational needs. This movement of special education in KSA has given rise to laws and regulations that guarantee the rights of people with special educational needs and has increased the quality of special services provided to them (Al-Mousa, 2004). Furthermore, the Ministries of Social Affairs, Health and Education have continued to develop policies and regulations to support this provision.

An example of this legislation is the Saudi Provision Code for Persons with Disabilities, which was established in 2000. The Code guarantees the rights of students with SEN to access appropriate and free health, social, educational and rehabilitation services, and provide for public agencies to assess an individual's eligibility for education, health and allied services (Princess Salman Centre for Disability Research, 2004). Article 8 of this document states that a Supreme Council for the Affairs of Persons with Disabilities shall be established and, in article 9, that this body is charged with full responsibility for formulating policies and monitoring activities in the field of disability: to guarantee appropriate implementation of these policies (Al-Mousa, 2010). This was then followed by establishing one of the most important documents in the country regarding the education of students with SEN, the Regulations of Special Education Programmes and Institutions (RSEPI), which was introduced in 2001. Representatives from the Ministry of Education and a number of academics and professionals developed this by reviewing

the United States' policy of special education, including the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1990). This document outlines the rights of individuals with disabilities and puts the underlying regulations in place for the provision of special services and inclusive educational. In article eighteen chapter three of this document it reiterates that mainstream schools are the optimal environment for educating students with special educational needs. In the KSA the RSEPI determines the main categories of individuals with disabilities, which are: severe and profound learning difficulties (mental retardation), deafness, blindness, physical disabilities, learning disabilities, multiple disabilities and more recently included autism and giftedness. Assessment into such categories is to be determined by a multi-disciplinary team (Ministry of Education, 2002).

The RSEPI also outlined and clarified the duties and responsibilities of professionals who work with students with SEN, and defined the procedure for drafting the Individual Education Plan (IEP). It also outlines the process for assessing the eligibility of students for special services, clarifies how schools should provide for students with SEN, and ensures the importance of effective parental involvement in this process, as well as in the creation of inclusive settings. Chapter six of the document outlines the procedures that teachers should follow in preparing, conducting, reviewing, and recording the lessons. Chapter three asserts the importance of increasing the awareness of special educational needs among families and in the community, as well as the role of SEN teachers in increasing that awareness across the whole school community (Ministry of Education, 2002).

More recently, in 2008, KSA ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and began to take measures to strengthen these rights for those dealing with

its main ministries. For example, the Ministry of Education identified a lead role for mainstream schools in including and educating students with SEN: expanding the role of the special schools and making sure it is used as the main source of developing the skilled human resource in educating disabled students, improving the curriculum and schools' educational inclusion programmes, adapting modern technology to assess disabled students and developing the organisational structure of the General Directorate of Special Education. The Ministry of Education also encourages the role of scientific research in the field of special education: cooperating and coordinating with the relevant authorities within the KSA and abroad to promote the education of students with SEN (Al- Mousa, 2010; Al-Saif, 2015).

2.3.1 Definition of Inclusion in the KSA

In the KSA, the general framework for the inclusion of students with SEN is based on that which has been attempted in the United States (US). The main focus is on enabling students with SEN to be educated in the least restrictive environment possible (Al-Mousa, 2010). This concept has been borrowed from the US Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 2007. It has been adapted by schools in various ways, with many choosing to place students with SEN in general education classes with extra assistance from a specially-trained teacher and additional teaching aids. Such students learn the same content as their typically developing peers, only with slight changes in teaching methods and resources. In the case of children with more severe disabilities or difficulties, separate learning units within the same school, with simplified content for students with disabilities, have been another way of including them, with social time being shared with typically developing peers in non- curricular activities. This partial-inclusion is observed most frequently in Saudi schools,

suggesting that the country has not yet reached the level of full inclusive practice (Al-Quraini, 2011).

When considering the terminologies used to describe inclusive practice, it is important to note that one danger of using these terminologies is that they may reflect the wrong practice in KSA context, and in the Arab world as a whole, due to translation issues: particularly in relation to the terms inclusion, mainstreaming and integration. This is because, although these terms reflect different meanings and indicate different forms of inclusive practice, the Arabic translation of all of them is: '**دمج**' *'Damg'* which literally translates as 'inclusion', which in Arabic means mixing or integrating two or more things together (Al-Anazi, 2012). This is to say that, although the terminology used in KSA to describe the practice is the term 'inclusion', this does not equate to the meaning used in other contexts such as the US, Canada or Australia, which holds far broader meaning. The definition of inclusion adopted by Saudi Ministry of Education is '*educating children with special educational needs in regular education schools, and providing them with special education services*' (Ministry of Education, 2002, p.8). Throughout this thesis, the terms inclusion and inclusive education are both used to refer to this definition.

2.3.2 Types of Inclusion, Targeted Group and Eligibility Assessment

Inclusion is being implemented in KSA either via partial inclusion - in which students with SEN are educated in separate classes, with shared break times and non- curricular activities, or through full inclusion, in which all students, with and without disabilities, receive their education in the same classroom space and are taught the same content, with any changes for students with SEN being facilitated by a 'resource room' (Al-

Mousa, 2010). In KSA, there are two groups who are targeted by inclusion; the first group is that already found in mainstream schools, including talented and gifted children, physically disabled children, children with learning disabilities, low vision students, and children with communication disorders. The other group is that consisting of individuals traditionally taught in special education such as the blind, the deaf, those with cognitive disorders, autistic children and children with multiple disabilities (Al-Mousa, 2010). Talented and gifted students were also included in the programme of policies by The General Secretariat of Special Education. Indeed, an integral part of KSA policy is based on the view that students with SEN, who are either talented or disabled, ought to be taught at general schools, where they can learn alongside their peers (Al-Khashrmi, 2000). Such students are believed to constitute at least twenty per cent of all students in KSA: all of whom are eligible to receive free education and support in order to meet their unique needs, within the general school system (Al-Mousa, 2010).

The students' eligibility assessment procedures begin by meeting with the child's parents, in order to obtain their consent prior to assessing the child; then collecting as much information as possible about the child themselves. If the child needs further assessment, s/he is then referred to a Diagnosis and Assessment Centre, at which the required assessments are conducted by a multi-disciplinary team. Based on this assessment, the committee determines the appropriate stage for the child to attend. This procedure can also take place in the school itself, conducted by the school's psychologist; teachers and external agencies may also be involved in order to determine the student's eligibility for special services (Al-Mousa, 2010).

2.3.3 Phases of Implementing Inclusion

The Ministry of Education implemented inclusion in KSA schools in three main stages, which are as follows: the planning phase, the implementation phase and the evaluation phase. In the planning phase, the Special Education Administration (SEA) began by clarifying the aims and objectives of inclusion programmes in mainstream schools, via regular meetings with school leaders. This was followed by the process of determining the number of students with SEN in various neighbourhoods, in order to calculate the number of programmers required to accommodate them. The SEA then contacted the local education authorities (LEA) to nominate the schools that were most appropriate and suitable for establishing inclusion programmes. The selected schools were then inspected by special education supervisors to determine whether or not they are suitable for opening inclusion programmes. The SEA then contacted the special institutes from which the students were to be transferred and held discussions with the students' parents about the new programmes offered to their children, to allocate the most geographically convenient schools to each child. In addition, during this stage, the LEA made efforts to increase the awareness of inclusion in mainstream schools, involving students with SEN due to attend these schools in regular workshops and seminars (Al-Zahrani, 2000).

The implementation phase, on the other hand, begins by providing the school's administration with extensive information about the categories of students' needs and the adjustments required on the part of the school to facilitate integration. The next step is to then allocate special education teachers to schools where students with SEN are to be transferred. This phase also includes preparing and adapting the classes of mainstream schools and providing appropriate teaching aids and furniture to suit students with SEN (Al-Zahrani, 2000). This phase also includes the allocation of a programme Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), who is responsible for

monitoring day-to-day inclusion practice, coordinating provisions for students with SEN and communicating with external agencies, including local educational authorities and the Administration of Special Education Support, as well as educational psychology services, and health and social services.

The final stage is the evaluation phase, which is a continuous process ongoing throughout each phase, and is implemented via weekly visits by inspectors from the Administration of General Education and the Administration of Special Education, who visit schools in which inclusion programmes have been implemented. The aim of these visits is to measure the extent to which students with SEN benefit from inclusion programmes and the extent to which these programmes are effective. It also aims to evaluate the school's efforts to increase awareness about inclusion and SEN programmes, and to create an inclusive culture in the school (Al-Zahrani, 2000).

2.4 Summary of Chapter

This chapter has presented an overview of the research context in KSA. It started with general information about Saudi society, its educational system and the provision of special education. It has discussed special school settings, the inclusive education movement in KSA, and the current provision for students with SEN. This chapter also presents a discussion of how Islam regards disability, as Islamic values influence all of the country's rules and regulations. Having outlined a background to the research context, the next chapter will present a review of related literature around inclusive education, internationally as well as locally, and provide a comprehensive review of literature around the obstacles hindering inclusive education in KSA.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

Before starting to present the literature review, it is worth mentioning here that the selection of the literature in this research was designed to investigate obstacles to inclusion of students with SEN in mainstreams schools. Firstly, inclusion, its meaning and the controversy around it is outlined, then the focus narrows to obstacles to its effectiveness and success in different contexts, including KSA and other Arab contexts.

Different forms of literature resources were used in this research including books (e-books and text-books), journals, research papers, articles, government documents such as (policies and statistics) newspapers, and other academic work. These literature sources were obtained either physically through looking for books and journals in libraries, or electronically through different search engines, such as Google scholar and Findit@bham to access different databases ERIC and ProQuest.

The databases were searched using a number of key words, including: 'disability', 'special educational needs', 'special education', 'inclusion', 'inclusive education', 'inclusive schools', 'barriers', 'factors', 'inclusive values', 'inclusive culture', 'attitudes', 'professional development', 'parents' involvement' and 'students' interactions'.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter present a literature review of inclusive education and students with SEN. The first part of this chapter presents the theoretical framework in which models of disability are discussed. The second part explores the controversy around the meaning of the terms inclusion and integration. It then discusses the meaning and practice of inclusion from a range of different perspectives. Part three of this chapter discusses key issues in promoting inclusive education by focusing on the research's four main

aspects; inclusive culture of mainstream schools, teachers' professional development, parents' involvement and collaboration with school and typically developing peers' interaction with and acceptance of students with SEN in the school. The chapter concludes with a summary of the main points of the reviewed literature, drawing together the key themes that inform the current research.

3.2 Literature Review Part One: Theoretical Framework

3.2.1 Models of Disability

In this research, in order to frame the discussion around special educational needs and inclusion, as well as obstacles to inclusion of students with SEN, two main models that are typically referenced in the literature about disability are discussed. These are what are referred to as the medical model, and the social model, of disability (Dewsbury et al., 2004; Al-Turkee, 2005; Frederickson and Cline, 2015). These models reflect specific way in which society views disability and, in turn, have a strong impact on society's responses to disability issues and the way people with disabilities are viewed in education. Throughout this thesis, both models are considered but the focus is mostly on the social model, given that it provides a more holistic view of obstacles to inclusion of students with SEN in the context of KSA. Firstly, however, an analysis will be made of key elements of the medical model, similarly, then, the social model will be analysed.

3.2.1.1 The Medical Model

The medical model views students with disabilities as medically impaired such as those with neurological impairment or cerebral palsy (Campbell and Oliver, 1996; Dewsbury et al., 2004). Blustein (2012) argued that the implication of the medical model was that

impairments entailed inherited incapacitation that meant that disabled people could never have the same chances as people without disabilities, even with modifications to the built environment or the structure of society. In other words, the premise of the medical model is that broader social, cultural, physical and political factors have no bearing on the issues confronting disabled people (Brittain, 2004). Impairment and Disability, based on this restricted perception, are those historically defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 1980 where;

Impairment*: "any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function."*

Disability*: "any restriction or lack, resulting from impairment, of ability to performany activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being."*

The disability is, therefore, removed from the societal context and is viewed as a constitutional problem within a particular child, directly related to the health condition. Obstacles to learning are viewed not as a function of poor teaching techniques or inadequate resources, but more the limitations of the children themselves (Villa and Thousand, 2005). Overcoming these obstacles becomes a question of how adequately one can treat and/or ameliorate the health condition whether through medical intervention or education (Hodkinson and Vickerman, 2009; Bingham et al., 2013).

The major criticism of this model is that it exists in a vacuum that neglects the factors that affect education, such as the type of school, the quality of instruction, and the surrounding cultures, values and attitudes that can either empower or disable these children (Lynas, 2002). Additionally, since this model relies so heavily on the individual's dysfunction, it groups those who appear unable to learn normally into diverse types according to their degree of deviation from the norm and tailors treatment

and education accordingly. Within this framework, for these children to gain any benefit from general education, it is they who have to be changed to fit into the system, rather than changing and adapting the system to accommodate them (Reindal, 2008). The medical model assumes that human beings are flexible and easily alterable, whereas society is a fixed and unalterable. People with disabilities are burdened with the responsibility of adapting himself to an environment that may be less than welcoming (Roush and Sharby, 2011). The medical model has also been criticised because it presents disability in a negatively, portraying disability as a sickness and addressing it from the perspective of a deficit (Mitra, 2006). Brittain (2004) warned that such language could shape interactions with and perceptions towards disabled people within the whole society.

3.2.1.2 The Social Model

According to Oliver (1996), the obstacles a student with disabilities faces are a factor of his or her environment and not his or her particular characteristics. Society is responsible for removing all obstacles that could lead to the isolation of a child with special needs. Instead of perceiving the child as a deviation that needs to be corrected, the social model perceives them as a minority with additional needs that can be catered for through adaptation of their environment. The social model defines disability and impairment, therefore, as follow;

Impairment*: "lacking part or all of a limb, or having a defective limb, organ or mechanism of the body."*

Disability*: "disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organisation which takes little or no account of people who have physical impairments and thus excludes them from participation in the mainstream of social activities"* (UPIAS, 1976).

This model, therefore, challenges the community and educators alike to alter their beliefs, and adapt the educational techniques and strategies to create an environment that caters to the needs of all its students and not just those who already fit in to their environment. This is an important stepping stone in the drive to have successful and effective inclusion for students with SEN (Smith et al., 2004; Villa and Thousand, 2005). Frederickson and Cline (2015) summed up a central theme of the social model of disability by stating; 'there are no students with learning difficulties, only adults with teaching difficulties' (Frederickson and Cline, 2015, p. 40). By redefining disability as a spectrum of and not separate from everyday life experience, the social model shifts the prevailing medical views on disability and in this way, can and has impacted legislations on discrimination. The model's implied superiority lies in the fact that its benefits are not limited to students with SEN but to any oppressed group, thereby creating a more tolerant and inclusive world in which to live and learn (Rieser and Mason, 1992).

The social model, however, is not without its criticisms. This is because by normalising disability, the model ignores the individual characteristics and abilities of a child which help to inform why they can or cannot perform in education (Bingham et al., 2013; Frederickson and Cline, 2015). Further, the social model dictates that the society must conform to accommodate the individual's needs, but it does not always lay out practical steps with which to do that (Palmer and Harley, 2012). This can lead to frustration from teachers faced with learning difficulties that are deeply rooted in an individual's particular characteristics (DeSimone and Parmar, 2006). The social model is also criticised due to the perceptions of certain commentators that it fails to take into consideration the disparities that exist between disabled people, which is to say, the model overlooks the various intersections that exist between an individual's oppressed

states (Fitzgerald, 2006). Here, intersectionality indicates that ableism is not independent of certain oppressive states, including other factors such as racism (Ayvazo and Sutherland, 2009) and sexism, thus giving rise to a system of oppression that can be viewed as a reflection of several types of oppression (Flintoff et al., 2008). According to this criticism, viewpoints founded in the social model are unable to comprehend the lived experience of disabled individuals in a way that is independent of various characteristics, including race and gender. At the same time, although the social model suggests that societal change is a precondition for the suitable treatment of disabled individuals, proponents of intersectionality argue that this is potentially insufficient. In fact, those who hold to intersectionality emphasise that it is necessary for society to consider the spectrum of possible discriminations, for example racism, or sexism, or a combination of these, since disabled people may fall into several of these categories (Fitzgerald, 2006).

Neither the medical model nor the social model is sufficient in and of themselves and neither of these models wholly encapsulates the needs of a child with SEN. However, in the context of Saudi Arabia, the social model may be more useful in that it provides a framework to change a way of thinking as education provision for learners with SEN is still in its infancy (Al-Quraini, 2011). By arguing for the application of the social model in an analysis of Saudi Arabia, I include the importance of medical interventions and their positive effects on individuals, but I also argue that, in addition to providing whatever medical intervention is needed, the barriers that society itself imposes should be removed, giving these children a chance not only to cope with everyday life, but also to be a part of it.

3.3 Literature Review Part Two: Inclusion

3.3.1 Discourse and Debate Surrounding the Definitions and Terminologies of Inclusion

Inclusion is a complicated and multi-faceted notion (Mitchell, 2014). Inclusion is hard to define, because despite the general principles described in official documents, there is a lack of international agreement on one single definition (Pearson, 2003). This is because the definition of inclusion can be influenced to varying degrees by a range of economic, historical and social factors (Silver, 2015). Similarly, Dyson (2010) notes that inclusion is considered to be a slippery concept and seems intricately linked with the structures, histories and cultures of different education systems. For instance, inclusion in England is not considered to be simply a placement of students with SEN in mainstream schools, but it is rather 'a fundamental approach to education that has implications for all children' (Dyson, 2010, p.2).

Differences can also be seen in the way inclusion is perceived in different contexts; for example, in a comparison made by Schneider and Harkins (2009) between the two different education systems in Canada and France. The definition of inclusion in Canada, produced by Inclusive Education Canada, stated that:

> *'Inclusive education means that all students attend and are welcomed by their neighbourhood schools in age-appropriate, regular classes and are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of the life of the school. Inclusive education is about how we develop and design our schools, classrooms, programmes and activities so that all students learn and participate together.'*

This Canadian perspective on inclusion is similar to that of the USA, whereas in France, the terminology of inclusive education is not widespread, and is replaced with the term 'schooling' and '*scolarisation des jeunes handicaps'* in the new Act of 2005 (*Loi pour*

l'égalité des droits et des chances, la participation et la citoyenneté des personnes handicapées' [law for equal rights and opportunities, participation and citizenship of handicapped persons]) which requires that, regardless of the disability or difficulty children may have, they all should be enrolled in their neighbourhood school (Schneider and Harkins, 2009, p. 278). However, this does not mean that the child will attend his/her local school, and the decision about the best place for the child to attend is made by a committee supervised by a *'enseignant referent'* [referent teacher] along with the child's parents (Schneider and Harkins, 2009, p. 278). Therefore, it is still possible that the child will attend specialised settings. A similar system is used within the UK, whereby pupils may be referred to an external setting after consultation between educational psychologists, special education teachers, parents, teachers and the local school (Tutt and Williams, 2015).

The focus in France is on integration of students with SEN into the educational system but not in the sense of inclusive education, whereas in Canada there are tendencies towards inclusion into mainstream classrooms, as all school-aged students attend public schools and are educated under the umbrella of the Department of Education (Schneider and Harkins, 2009). In France, the aim is to guarantee education for all students regardless of what form it takes, whether full inclusion in the mainstream classroom, a special class in the mainstream school, or part-time models which are part of the mainstream classroom and part of the special class, between the mainstream classroom and the special institution, or between the special class and the special institution (Schneider and Harkins, 2009). In Canada, however, the aim is to support their human rights, as it considers inclusive education to be an important factor influencing the child's future life and development. This is not surprising as Canada made history as the first country in the world to include the rights of people with disabilities in their

constitution when adopting the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982 (Schneider and Harkins, 2009, p.278). In KSA, inclusion is defined as educating students with SEN in mainstream schools, and providing the necessary special services (Ministry of Education, 2000). In terms of inclusive practice, therefore, and in comparison to France and Canada, KSA can be considered more integration, at least in terms of the location in which education takes place: this is to say that, whilst Canada focuses on creating a supportive and inclusive environment in the classrooms and the French focus on providing education regardless of the learning conditions, KSA appears currently to be mostly focusing on integration within a local setting.

3.3.2 Inclusion and Integration

The vocabulary related to inclusion has been changing over the years, which makes it difficult to define the term and goes some way to explain the lack of consensus, especially when the nature of inclusion is questioned (Mitchell, 2014). 'Integration' and 'inclusion' are two terms used to describe the process of shifting the education of students with SEN from a separate special school environment to mainstream schools with their typically developing peers. Although often these two terms are used interchangeably, their meanings in practice differ. Booth (2000) defined integration as the process by which students with special needs participate more actively in both the educational and social spheres of their school environment. It was also highlighted by Foreman (2005) that integration is a process that enables students with SEN to access a less restricted environment; through doing so, they have more opportunities for interaction with their typically developing peers than the special segregated environment (Wood, 2006). Integration, therefore, does not involve sharing the same curricula, classes and having the same outcomes. Rather, it is focused more on giving

students with SEN opportunities for social interaction through activities that meet their special need, a concept that focuses on creating a space where students with SEN feel more of a connection with their mainstream school environment and more socially included in school communities.

In the UK, following the Warnock report (1978), Ellis et al. (2008) show that integration is the recognition of the rights of people with disabilities to participate freely in everyday activities, as well as the absence of segregation and a greater level of social acceptance. Integration can operate at three levels: the physical level refers to the location of education, so that students with SEN go to the same school as their peers; the social level, where students with SEN socialise but do not study with their peers; and the functional level, where all students attend the same classes, and follow the same curriculum goals and activities (Ellis et al., 2008). The term integration, however, was replaced by the term inclusion which shifts the focus from a needs based to a rights based agenda as lunched by UNESCO (1994) which was the key turning point in using the term inclusion. A human rights perspective will be discussed later in this chapter, section 3.3.4. The shift in defining various terminologies such as segregation, integration, and inclusion is twofold; firstly, it is reflective of shared concerns of special education teachers who believe that students with SEN are not receiving adequate education opportunities; secondly, it is a part of a move towards changing public attitudes regarding inclusion so that a more inclusive society can be created (Thomas, 1997; Barton, 1999; Reid, 2005).

Definitions of inclusion can also refer to the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), which is often used in the US (Rothstein, 2000). This term is one of the principles of IDEA which was enacted in 1975. According to Crockett and Kauffman (2013) one of

the primary principles of IDEA is that a student with a disability should receive their education to the appropriate extent as comparable as possible to their typically developing peers in the general education system. IDEA, however, does not spell out the LRE for each type of disability and is, therefore, open to situational and local interpretations. Although placement in the general education classroom could be the LRE for some students with SEN, this might not be the case for all students. It can be argued therefore that the LRE for some needs, such as severe and profound learning disabilities, might be special schools, in which the necessary resources and equipment are provided and in which such students might have greater developmental opportunities. This is further supported by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS) of the U.S. Department of Education, who argued that not all students with disabilities should be placed in general education classroom as some might require a placement in which education is designed to address their particular needs and this is not always the general education classroom (Yell, 2006).

Whilst the focus when defining inclusion is sometimes on students' participation, it can likewise be on the schools and the efforts they should make to achieve greater inclusion. For example, according to Mittler (2012) inclusion is: a 'process of reforming and restructuring of the school as a whole, with the aim of ensuring that all pupils can have access to the whole range of social and educational opportunities offered by the school' (Mittler, 2012, p. 2). Similarly, Smith et al. (2005) stated that inclusion is a process during which pupils with SEN are given the opportunity to participate in the general learning environment, as well as being provided with reasonably modified curriculums and taught in more effective ways. Inclusion is also described by Glazzard (2014) as a process by which 'schools are challenged to make adaptations and adjustments to cater for the diverse needs of students (Glazzard, 2014, p.40). Additionally, according to

Kamen, (2012) inclusion should be seen as an extension of the school's equal opportunities, practice and policy. Hence inclusion is an ongoing process that results in students with special needs being better accepted through adequately developing inclusive schools (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002).

An implication from the definitions put forward by authors in the UK are that inclusion necessitates full school change, where an overall environment must be created that allows students with SEN opportunities to participate fully in school life equally to their typically developing peers. In addition, what these definitions also have in common is an emphasis on the need for schools to focus on creating an inclusive environment, and to offer opportunities for a range of working strategies and individualised learning to ensure that no student is excluded. This focus on inclusion may have implications for the education of typically developing students, and it is likely to increase the need for additional resources, such as teacher time, training or equipment. It is also likely to lead to inconsistency in how education of students with SEN is delivered across different schools, depending on how prepared the schools are. However, this goal of enabling all students to learn in the same environment is the start of a process towards more positive attitudes, greater understanding, and the development of a shared culture of inclusion in schools (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010). By ensuring that teachers and schools work towards this common goal, they can begin to solve problems and develop infrastructure and best practices in this area, as well as confronting and overcoming possible obstacles to inclusion.

3.3.3 Human Rights Perspective of Inclusion

Inclusion can also be seen as a human rights issue (Ballard, 2016). In this view, students with disabilities have the right to equal opportunities and the same choices as other members of the community. This was supported by international declarations, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (1948: Article 26), which states that,

> *'Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit; Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.'*

The right for free and appropriate education was also one of the core issues in the UNESCO Salamanca Statement which is an international documentation produced and agreed upon by ninety-two governments, one of which was KSA, and twenty-five international organisations in the World Conference of Special Needs Education, held in Salamanca, Spain in 1994. It calls on the international community to endorse the approach of inclusive schools by implementing practical and strategic changes. The Salamanca statement is in itself an essential part of the overall human rights agenda. It clearly illustrates that inclusive education is 'the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all' (UNESCO, 1994, p.11). It also stated that '… education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs' (UNESCO, 1994, p.11).

Such declarations have led to a significant impact on the reduction of segregated provision for children with SEN, although an ongoing debate is still questioning whether inclusive settings are better than separate special education for those with severe and complex needs. Another question arising from looking at inclusion as a human right is who can best represent the child's rights - the parents, the child, another adult or the state? (Wertheimer, 1997). If it is the parents or another adult, the question is whether he or she will accept that the child attends a special school or a segregated setting? For example, if a child with a severe disability has difficulties with being included in a mainstream setting, is unhappy in such environment or is rejected by his typically developing peers, the rights of the child, as well as of any adult involved, cannot always be upheld. However, this in fact appears to be answered by the UDHR statement 3 in article 26: *'parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children'* (United Nations, 1948). This raises the concern that this article might be interpreted as allowing adults to take decisions on behalf of a child, regardless of that child's own views (Wertheimer, 1997).

In KSA, although children are free to select their preferred educational setting under the ethical consideration of Islamic law, it is often the parents who decide for them, as it is their responsibility for raising their children and ensuring their religious and moral education, as mentioned in Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam (1990, Article 18):

> *'Parents and those in such like capacity have the right to choose the type of education they desire for their children, provided they take into consideration the interest and future of the children in accordance with ethical values and the principles of Shari'a* (The Arab Charter on Human Rights, 2004, p. 24).'

A more recent and significant development is the United Nation Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (2006) with its stated purpose 'to promote,

protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities and to promote respect for their inherent dignity' (United Nation, 2006, p.3). The CRPD has comprehensively specified the rights for education by stating that 'in realizing the right of persons with disabilities to education states parties shall ensure that:

A. Persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, and that children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary education, or from secondary education, on the basis of disability; United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
B. Persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live;
C. Reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirements is provided;
D. Persons with disabilities receive the support required, within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education;
E. Effective individualized support measures are provided in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion' (United Nation, 2006, p.14).

KSA signed and ratified the CRPD in 2008, signalling its commitment to these aims. This agreement strengthens the rights of people with disabilities and, in essence, suggests that people with a disability are treated as equally as possible to those without special needs. This supports the approach of integrating students with SEN into mainstream education, with efforts being made to rectify any limitations to learning and participation, whilst seeking to keep their education as consistent as possible with that

of all other students. Although the debate on human rights not only answers many questions, it also opens the door to new ones; however, it can generally be concluded that human rights discourses represent a strong ethical rationale for inclusion, such that all individuals, regardless of their needs and ability, should enjoy their human rights.

3.3.4 Inclusion in Broader Sense (Intersectionality Perspective of Inclusion)

Although the main focus of inclusive education movements concerned people with disability, scholars in recent years have started to advocate for a broader concept of inclusion. In particular, a number of scholars have recently begun to suggest that inclusive educational practices should seek to accommodate any individuals who might be marginalised or excluded for any reason, such as, gender, ethnicity, race, mother tongue, care status, sexual preferences, religious, beliefs, or socioeconomic status (Gerschel, 2003).

A critical motivation for this broader viewpoint, namely, that the concept of inclusion should be broadened, is the observation that any of the aforementioned factors can heighten the likelihood that a child is marginalised or excluded, especially when these factors intersect or act in combination (Topping and Maloney, 2005; Artiles, 2013). Given these implications, scholars such as Booth and Ainscow (1998) have argued that inclusion policies should not focus in an isolated way only on students who have been categorised as having SEN. This can be, for example, seen in the Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (2002) where inclusion is defined as enabling all students to participate fully in the life and work of mainstream settings, whatever their needs;

> *All children and young people – with and without disabilities or difficulties – learning together in ordinary pre-school provision, schools, colleges and universities with appropriate networks of support. Inclusion means enabling all students to participate fully in the life and work of mainstream settings,*

> *whatever their needs. There are many different ways of achieving this and an inclusive timetable might look different for each student* (CSIE, 2002, p.2).

Similarly, the UNESCO (2005) defines inclusion as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of all students' needs through increasing participation in learning. One of the hallmarks of such perspectives is an underlying critique which holds that the previous ways of viewing inclusion, although admirable in their attempts to maximise students with SEN participation, have resulted in extensive, potentially harmful categorisation (Hart et al., 2004). According to Ainscow et al. (2006), inclusion should be viewed in a broad sense as an educational approach which is grounded in a certain philosophical foundation, namely, one that prioritises the development of all underperforming students, not simply those who fall into the category of SEN. Therefore, in order to move away from category-focused SEN viewpoints, Booth and Ainscow (2006) developed the so-called Index for Inclusion, the main aim of which was to encourage commentators to forgo concepts such as 'special educational needs' and 'special educational provision' with concepts such as 'learning barriers', 'participation barriers', and 'supportive learning and participation resources' (Ainscow et al., 2006).

Booth and Ainscow (2006) defined participation as learning alongside others and collaborating with them in shared learning experiences. They also used participation to refer to the quality of the students' experiences whilst they are in the school. Participation implies a requirement to remove the obstacles which exclude certain groups and individuals: 'inclusion may also be seen as a continuing process of breaking down obstacles to learning and participation for all children and young people' (Booth and Ainscow, 2002, p.1). The definition of Booth and Ainscow further involved a

number of principles that they summarised in the index of inclusion, which is a guide to developing inclusive schools. Some of these principles include:

- ‘Putting inclusive values into action.
- Supporting everyone to feel that they belong.
- Increasing participation for children and adults in learning and teaching activities, relationships and communities of local schools.
- Reducing exclusion, discrimination, obstacles to learning and participation.
- Restructuring cultures, policies and practices to respond to diversity in ways that value everyone equally.
- Learning from the reduction of obstacles for some children to benefit children more widely.
- Viewing differences between children and between adults as resources for learning.
- Emphasising the development of school communities and values, as well as achievements.
- Fostering mutually sustaining relationships between schools and surrounding communities.
- Recognising that inclusion in education is one aspect of inclusion in society’ (Booth and Ainscow, 2002, p.1).

Based on this wider view of inclusion, extensive criticism has been directed towards the UK’s Labour government’s inconsistent view of inclusion by scholars, such as Ainscow et al. (2006) and Thomas (2007). For example, inclusive practices within

primary and secondary educational institutions were undermined by the 2001 SEN Code of Practice from the perspective of Thomas (2007), since diversity and social inclusion are only available for learners who fall into the category of requiring 'support'. Categorisation of this kind was similarly critiqued by Ainscow et al. (2006), who paid close attention to the various ways in which practices, as well as the forms of language which lead to them, create barriers towards a broad view of inclusion. As a case in point, intersecting factors are clearly at play when one considers the statistical evidence, for example, that working-class male students represent a large proportion of students with SEN, or that African-Caribbean male students are overly-represented among learners with emotional and behavioural issues.

The conclusions drawn by Coard (2007) and Hick (2007) are comparable to those of Ainscow et al. (2006) in this respect, and Benjamin (2005, p. 177) emphasised that when the legitimacy of certain accounts of diversity fail to extend to all relevant parties, then it is necessary to conceptualise differences from the perspective of social relations (and, in particular, issues such as subordination and domination). Ultimately, the main contention of these scholars is that extensive categorisation disguises the prominent part played by intersectionality in generating problems for learners, and in certain cases, critical factors such as the way in which gender, race, and class are perceived and constructed. As such, the recent literature can be viewed as an extension of Epstein (2011), argument that categorisation, paired with an over-emphasis on the concept of SEN, is an ineffective way in which to contend with the difficulties encountered by young learners. Instead, categorisation of this kind should be resisted, and in its place, a thorough exploration of intersectionality, as well as the obstacles to learning and participation, should be pursued. In Saudi Arabia, the construction of inclusion is limited to including students with SEN in mainstream schools and society. To the

researcher knowledge, there is no literature or discussion in the KSA that focused on inclusion in broader sense and include other factors that might lead to marginalisation.

3.4 Literature Review Part Three: Obstacles to Inclusion

3.4.1 Introduction

The nature of inclusive education as a social construct can be seen clearly when we recognise how it emerges from the linkages existing between social systems and individuals. According to Mac Ruairc (2013) and Slee (2012), inclusive education refers to a process in which individuals are either included in or excluded from a socially constructed setting. Therefore, when looking at the obstacles to inclusion, adequate examinations should consider every determinant that gives rise to it, ranging from individuals and social systems to the regional, national, and global settings in which these social systems are embedded. This is because the features of an individual learner ought not to impact their chances of receiving a viable inclusive education. Instead, environments and their related features, paired with the interlinkages that connect these environments and factors, should be the determining variables for the success of inclusive education. In this regard, the social ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) is relevant. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), visualised the environments that learners operate within as being made up of four layers structural nesting, namely: micro-system, meso-system, exo-system and macro-system.

Micro-system refers to the situation when learners are directly engaged in formal or informal learning; they are interacting with and surrounded by what Bronfenbrenner (1979) refers to as the micro-system, a set of both physical and non-physical (i.e., social) elements, including teachers, classrooms, classmates, and the social dimensions

of schooling. Meso-system comprises of a set of highly-dynamic interactions that occur continuously between the elements of the micro-system, and which impact the learner in direct ways (e.g., the child's relationships at school, at home, and within neighbourhood peer groups, while in the case of an adult, the relationships within the family, at work, and in the context of social life). Exo-system denotes a single setting (or multiple settings) in which the developing individual is not involved as an active participant, but in which certain processes take place that influence (or are influenced by) the operations occurring within the developing individual's environment. As a case in point, a child's exo-system is likely to include the setting in which their parents work, the other classrooms in which their siblings are educated, and the family's social network. Although the child is unlikely to interact in a direct way with any of the elements of the exo-system, such elements positively or negatively influence aspects of their immediate setting.

Finally, the macro-system we inhabit has a powerful impact on the nature of our relations (Bronfenbrenner, 2005), since it contains the social beliefs, cultural values, political orientations, and so-called 'community occurrences' that energise our lives. In essence, the macro-system is the sum of the congruencies that exist between the previously mentioned systems (namely, the micro-system, meso-system, and exo-system), as well as the ideologies and systems of belief that underpin these congruencies. One way in which to conceptualise the macro-system is by viewing it as the congruency one observes within a particular culture, specifically regarding the structural and content-related features of the lower-order systems (namely, the micro-system, meso-system, and exo-system). Examples of elements of the macro-system include the relationships that exist within certain types of setting, the way in which moral activities are organised, the content of moral activities, and the type of links that

exist between the settings that might affect the developing individuals. Most noteworthy is that organisational and behavioural congruencies of this kind tend to be reinforced by the collective beliefs and attitudes observed within a particular subculture or culture. The part played by the national community in influencing human development is significant, especially in view of the fact that without local authorities, government organisations, and other forms of centralised power, the effective maintenance and implementation of inclusive education would be impossible (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

Since this research aims to explore the barriers that schools in KSA face in the process of developing inclusive education, these four systems are important to consider. Therefore, the preceding section will narrow the focus on discussing four main areas that are part of the social ecological system and have an impact on the students directly and indirectly. These are; inclusive culture in mainstream school settings, professional development of teachers, parental involvement and collaboration with schools and peers interaction with students with SEN.

3.4.2 Inclusive Culture in School Settings

School culture is an extremely important factor in successfully building and promoting inclusive schools. The notion of 'school culture' refers to the stream of 'norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and rituals built up over time as people work together, solve problems and confront challenges. These informal expectations and values shape how people think, feel and act in schools' (Peterson and Deal, 1998, p. 28). Fleming and Kleinhenz (2007, p. 5) similarly defined the school culture as the way school's members do things and relate to each other at school, it represents all the knowledge, beliefs,

values, customs, morals, rituals, symbols, and they add the element of the language of a group to be indicator of the school culture.

Corbett (2001, p.400) on the other hand, focused on the layout of the school where, by reflecting on her own experiences working in an inclusive primary school in the UK, she identified that, 'school culture can be felt in the general atmosphere of the building, in the way people speak to each other, what is visible and valued, where images and artefacts are placed and how the school projects its 'self'. Dyson et al. (2003) conducted a three-year research in partnership with 25 schools across three education authorities regarding the ways in which mainstream schools attempt to become more inclusive and enhance student participation. They found that a school's culture was a crucial element in such initiatives. They also found that the generally accepted social rules, ideologies and discourses observed in inclusive mainstream schools showed high levels of overall participation from all students.

When examining the concept of school culture, it is useful to view it through the lens of what has been termed the 'onion-skin' model, developed by Starratt (2010), whereby a school is visualised as being made up of layers of intelligible activity as presented in Figure 3.1. The Onion Model was proposed first 30 years ago by Sergiovanni and Starratt (1998). It remains the most useful and valid approach to understanding school culture and especially the role of leadership in shaping the culture of a school (Starratt, 2010). The benefit of using the onion model in understanding the school culture, particularly in the area of inclusive education has been confirmed in other countries and in different situations by a number of studies such as Carrington (1999), Vlachou (2004), ZoniouSideri and Vlachou (2006) and Korthagen (2013).

However, it has not yet been identified to have been used in KSA to understand school inclusive culture. The research here is focusing on the obstacles to inclusion as perceived by special education teacher s and one of its focuses is the school culture and the role of leadership in shaping inclusive culture of school. Therefore, this model was deemed the most appropriate one to use when understanding special education teacher s' perceptions of their schools' leadership and the extent to which it supports or hindrances inclusivity in schools. The next section will provide a description of this model as presented by Starratt. This will help in providing a clear view of this model as this will help later in the analysis of this research data of the aspect of inclusive culture in the context of KSA.

As the figure 3.1 shows, the outer layer of Starratt's Onion Model of Schools culture is the operational school level. This level represents everything a person can see when walking in the school building, such as students talking to other students, teachers chatting in the common room, students running in the playground and a teacher explaining a lesson to the class. According to Starratt (2010), the most important layer is positioned between the organisational and operational levels: school culture. School culture is concerned with the patterns that can be found across relationships in a school, the metaphorical ways used by teachers when talking about the work of students, the rituals performed by everyone at the school, and how events and happenings around the school are interpreted. In fact, the cultural dynamic shapes the patterns around which the school community interacts and operates and how the norms and values are enacted at the school. It further determines the images and vocabulary which the school members use to describe an event.

Figure 3.1: The Onion Model of School Culture (Starratt, 2010, p.62).

Underneath the layer of culture comes the organisation layer, which represents the daily schedule and the distribution of subject matter, the calendar for special events, the systems of communication used in the classroom as well as the organisational chart which shows the authority and the relationships. Beneath the organisation layer is the school programmes layer, which represents different academic disciplines and related factor impacting upon them during the academic year, such as health, guidance, discipline and parent programmes. Under the programme layer is the policies layer, which functions as the guidance for the programmes and operations. This layer includes the rules that determine day-to-day decisions and which require frequent monitoring and any necessary modifications to ensure they correlate with any changes that take place in the school.

The next layer is how the school articulates its purpose; in other words, this is the school mission statement, which refers to the goals and purposes of the school. Then comes the layer of beliefs and assumptions, which according to Starratt are not articulated and yet exercise a great influence over the behaviour of the people in the school. These

unarticulated beliefs can be a source of conflict between teachers and parents and among teachers themselves. These assumptions and beliefs can be prejudicial to students and can lead teachers to deem students as problems or a mess to be fixed. They can also be friendly to students and focus on the great potential of the students for learning and work to develop this potential. Myth is located at the core of the Onion Model. Using the term 'myth' is, according to Starratt, not intended to mean fairy tales or superstitions, but rather to indicate stories whose symbolism supports people in valuing and judging human striving and placing themselves in an identifiable order of things. According to Starratt, this core is also unarticulated. These symbols are about human life and dignity and the symbolic literature which shapes people's conventions and beliefs as well as their attitudes in life. These symbols are the beliefs upon which the school is built. They reflect the goal which the school or any organisation is working to achieve.

In order to be effective, inclusive education should be rooted in the school culture as well as in all the systems that have been represented by layers in Starratt's Onion Model of culture (Carrington, 1999). School culture as discussed above, dictates the way schools practice inclusion in the school. This includes the school's inclusive programme and activities that cater to students with SEN and ensure their participation as well as inclusive language used to talk about students with SEN and the artefacts displayed around the school that reflect inclusivity (Fleming and Kleinhenz, 2007; Walton, 2015). Furthermore, it not only includes the practices that are visibly recognisable but also a number of procedural expectations, such as the role of the head teacher, teachers, students and parents (Kozleski and Thorius, 2013). Establishing an inclusive education requires a special type of school culture that advocates the conditions appropriate for autonomous individual development and makes these

conditions the main value and aim for inclusive schools. It is about creating a philosophy of acceptance and celebrating differences, constructing a space where everyone feels valued and is respectfully treated (Carrington, 1999). In this way, schools with inclusive cultures view difference as an opportunity to create a supportive network through which inclusive practices are shared and encouraged (Kaplan and Owings, 2013).

Given that, without an in-depth understanding of these issues, it will not be possible to understand the obstacles to the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools in KSA in terms of the inclusive culture of the school. This is because school culture is the core of all the attitudes and activities as well as the values and assumptions that dominate in schools, therefore exploring school culture is paramount to realise from where the changes should start (Starratt, 2010). Inclusive school culture often dictates whether inclusion is met with acceptance or with rejection, the former usually being observed in schools with a 'shared sense of what is important, a shared ethos of caring and concern, and a shared commitment to helping students learn' and where head teachers in particular are seeking to promote a more inclusive environment (Peterson and Deal, 1998, p. 29). The remainder of the section on inclusive culture in school settings will focus on four especially important elements and indicators of inclusive culture of schools, which are schools head teacher, teachers, collaboration and relationships and language.

- **School Head teachers**

Building an inclusive culture in schools is highly dependent upon the actions of those in leadership positions, such as school head teachers and teachers. In their practical

guide, Kaplan and Owings (2013) have argued that the key component in prompting an inclusive school culture is head teachers' attitudes and commitment to inclusive practices. This is because they play a critical role in formulating the school's vision and goals as well as promoting diversity and acceptance. Head teachers are essentially central to successfully developing an inclusive school (Finnan, 2000; Hallinger and Heck, 2002). The existing literature on inclusive education suggests that schools that consciously implement inclusive policies and attempt to foster inclusive school cultures are mostly led by individuals who share these values of acceptance and inclusivity as well as practice an open management style which encourages diversity in the way leadership roles are allocated (Dyson et al., 2004).

In addition, from an from analysis of American schools by Crockett's (2002), it was suggested that the central tenets of leadership for the development of inclusive schools are: (i) ethical practice, thereby promoting equal access to education and accountability; (ii) individual considerations, thereby ensuring individuality and exceptionality; (iii) legal equality, thereby ensuring that fair and just government policies provide suitable education; (iv) effective programming, thereby ensuring that student-centric teaching is provided to elevate learning outcomes; and (v) cooperative and therefore productive relationships. Each of these tenets is crucial because, together, they indicate the need for a comprehensive approach to enhancing inclusive education.

Research in the United States and Israel examining the role of head teachers' attitudes and practices in the success of inclusive education has elicited a variety of responses; many head teachers demonstrate openness and positivity towards the implementation of inclusive education, whilst others perceived it negatively and revealed low expectations for its success (Avissar et al., 2003; Praisner, 2003; Chandler, 2015). The

attitudes of head teachers, therefore, is an important aspect to consider when building an inclusive school culture, because school head teachers are role models, not only for staff and students but also for parents and the wider community. Therefore, their attitudes may have an impact upon the attitudes of others: their positivity with regard to inclusion could influence the wider school community. These studies confirmed, an older research by Villa et al. (1996), which had previously found that administrative leadership was the most powerful predictor of positive teacher attitudes towards inclusion in schools. As a result, it can be assumed that high levels of support, particularly at a leadership level, can aid teachers and teaching assistants in providing accessible education and facilitating effective learning for students with SEN (DiPaola and Walther-Thomas, 2003).

A school's leadership could therefore be either the greatest support or the greatest obstacle in the successful development of inclusive practices (Trump and Hange, 1996). This can be attributed to the role of school head teachers in increasing awareness of inclusive education in order to ensure that all those involved clearly understand and work together to achieve that goal (Kluth, 2010). In an American research by Salisbury and McGregor (2002) it was reported that school head teachers were able to make a large number of operational and cultural changes within their schools, exerting their influence on a number of levels. This includes changing teachers' attitudes and introducing practices that are reflective of a more inclusive approach. Although those findings are relatively old, the findings are supported by more recent evidence from Waldron and Redd (2011), who built upon the previous research by stressing the importance of the school head teacher's role in actively working with staff and other stakeholders in leadership positions to create an inclusive culture in schools. Head teachers, in particular, should be the 'keepers of the vision'; they should assume the

responsibility for ensuring that all understand the aims of the institution, including those pertaining to inclusivity and optimised learning strategies (Bulach et al., 2016, p.32). By doing so, schools become institutions of collaboration, communication and support for all students (McLeskey, 2014).

Supportive head teachers in inclusive education will support inclusive culture in all aspects of learning and will endeavour to create core values and assumptions that underlie the behaviour and actions in the mainstream school (Spence and Pena, 2015). It is the inclusive school culture that should be reinforced and supported because, according to Sarratte (2010), it legitimises all actions and activities. According to White and Cooper (2013), in Canada, there are three administrative tasks that head teachers can do to support inclusive culture in mainstream schools: creating a new understanding of inclusiveness and diversity, nurturing inclusive culture in the school, and building relationships between the school and the community to create an inclusive environment. Inclusive head teachers should believe that all students deserve equal and high-quality educational opportunities. Based on this, successful inclusion in a school goes beyond placing students with SEE in a general education classroom. It is rather about playing a crucial role in promoting a culture and a vision that support inclusive learning and the environment surrounding it (Spence and Pena, 2015).

The major point in this discussion is that to establish an inclusive school culture, the head teacher needs to create inclusiveness in all the systems and elements that have been discussed in the school culture Onion Model. The Onion Model of school culture asserts this discussion in the sense that the head teacher's role can be found in almost all of the Onion Model layers. For example, s/he is responsible for articulating the school purpose and vision, ensuring implementation of inclusive polices, ensuring

inclusivity in the school operations and programmes as well as enhancing positive attitudes of school members. In other words, head teachers are in charge of rooting inclusiveness into every layer of the Onion Model. Therefore, head teacher are the ones who can initiate changes in any of these layers to promote inclusive school culture (Foreman and Arthur-Kelly, 2017).

- **Teachers' Attitudes**

Teachers are also of particular importance in establishing and enhancing inclusive school culture. This is because creating inclusive schools is the shared responsibility of all those involved in the school, including teachers who are the direct source of support for students with SEN (Pearson et al., 2015). Their attitudes, therefore, are very crucial in establishing inclusive school culture as they reflect the willingness or unwillingness to accept inclusion of students (Calogiannakis and Wolhuter, 2015). This is because attitudes shape behaviour and, if known, can be used to predict how an individual will behave. For example, teachers with negative attitudes towards inclusion might be expected to feel uncomfortable about working with students with SEN, and vice versa (Todorovic et al., 2011).

There is a substantial body of literature concerning teachers' attitudes towards inclusion (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002; Bradshaw and Mundia, 2006; Arif and Gaad, 2008; Nayak, 2008) and it is proposed that successful inclusion is highly dependent on the attitudes of those who are responsible for implementing it (Salend, 2001; Van Reusen et al., 2001; de Boer and Simpson, 2009). In particular, teachers' attitudes have been found, by survey research, to be highly influential and inclusion is more likely to be successful if teachers are part of the team responsible for implementing it (Malone et

al., 2001). At the same time, Van Reusen et al. (2001) argued that inclusion programmes might be in danger of failure if teachers do not perceive them positively.

Later, Ali et al., (2006) conducted a research on teachers' attitudes in Malaysia and suggested that negative attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education might become a serious obstacle to successful inclusion. Those researchers also mentioned that these attitudes might have a great impact on the collaborative relationships between teachers in the school, and they place specific emphasis on the importance of collaboration between teachers in enhancing inclusive school culture and ultimately enhancing inclusion. Returning to the Onion Model of school culture (Starratt, 2010), it can be said that inclusive education needs to be infused into all the areas of the school and diversity should be accepted as a norm not only by the teachers but by preparing everyone at school for inclusive education. Implementing inclusive education in a mainstream school requires collaboration from everyone at the school to ensure that the students' needs are met.

- **Collaboration and Relationships between Teachers**

Teachers' relationships and their ability to collaborate are essential components of effective inclusive practice and are indicators of school culture (Smith et al., 2003; Allison, 2011). This is supported by an American research by Kilanowski-Press et al. (2010), in which they argued that in order for inclusive education to be successful, there has to be collaboration between general and special education teachers. The significance of collaboration stems mainly from the fact that teachers' collaboration can provide a class with a much higher quality of teaching, leading to improved student performance (Conderman, 2011). This correlation is most likely to be caused by the

positive effect of the specialist training and knowledge of teachers in inclusive education (Hepner and Newman, 2010; Leko and Brownwell, 2009; Sayeski, 2009). Yet, notwithstanding its numerous benefits, creating a collaborative environment is not an easy task and a number of obstacles stand in the way of this ideal coming to fruition (Friend, 2000).

The lack of collaboration between general and special education teachers has been reported be a significant barrier to inclusive education (Hammond and Ingalls, 2003). This was explained by the fact that there is a tradition of separating special education and general education, whereby both fields of education perceive education from a slightly different angle (Robinson and Buly, 2007). Another reason could revolve around the belief held by some general education teachers that students with SEN are not their responsibility, and this results in inclusion turning into exclusion, by practicing isolation inside the classroom (Tilstone and Rose, 2003). However, providing education is always a shared responsibility. A view emphasized by the SEN Code of Practice (2015) where it clearly states that: 'all teachers are teachers of pupils with special educational needs' (Tutt and Williams, 2015, p.111). In this respect, Friend et al. (2010) argued that successful collaboration means shared responsibility in decision-making, shared resources and accountability and the ascribing of value to personal interactions.

The apparent lack of training and preparation is thought to be responsible for lowering teachers' self-esteem and belief in their own abilities to cope with inclusive practices, whilst also hindering their collaboration with special education teachers (Boling, 2007; Lombardi and Hunka, 2001; Hastings and Oakford, 2003). In their research, Friend et al. (2010), stated that teacher preparation programmes do not include any specific training to help teachers learn the important skills necessary for successful

collaboration. This consequently leads to misunderstandings, as if special education and general education teachers were speaking two different languages with respect to what practically constitutes collaboration. Furthermore, Burstein et al. (2004, p. 104) in developing and implementing their change model in Californian schools argued that, according to the evidence that is presently available, 'general education teachers feel unprepared to serve students with disabilities, have little time available to collaborate, and make few accommodations for students with special needs'. The issue of training and teachers' professional development will be discussed later in this chapter as one of the main aspects in prompting inclusion.

Unequal workload distribution is another reason for poor collaborative relationships between teachers. In a research by Al-Natour et al., (2015) in Jordan, it was highlighted how a tense relationship between special and general education teachers stems from the way in which both consider the allocation of their duties and workload as unfair, thus hindering any initiative to collaborate. Not only are general education teachers being reported as not sharing the responsibility, but special education teachers are also being reported as being largely unhelpful to general education teachers by handing over the responsibility of educating students with SEN to their general education colleagues with little instruction (Al-Natour et al., 2015). Hamilton-Jones and Vail Another (2013) in the United States, found that a major hindrance to collaboration is not having enough time for educational teams to plan together how to implement inclusive education in mainstream classroom more effectively.

Similarly, in their Australian research, O'Rourke and Houghton (2009) found that giving teachers more time to collaborate leads to a significant improvement of the learning performance of students with SEN. This was supported at the same time on

the other side of the world by Leatherman (2009), whose research of schools in the United States revealed that even when both teachers are willing to collaborate, the lack of time impairs the quality of their collaboration. As pointed out by other research findings, it is a paradox that the success of efficient collaboration is rooted in many of the obstacles in its path; among the structural and procedural challenges that have been found are lack of role clarity (Damore and Murray, 2008; Takala et al., 2009), insufficient time for planning, inadequate administrative support, and insufficient professional development opportunities (Murawski, 2010; Ahmmed et al., 2012). Collaboration has also been identified to be a strong determinant of the school inclusive culture (Wilhelm, 2010). This was earlier argued by Hoy and Miskel (2008), that a robust school culture is characterised by the collaborative relationships between teachers and that the schools' overall achievements are linked to the level of collaborative relationship between its members. Hence, it is important to consider collaboration as determinant of the inclusive culture of mainstream school in the context of KSA.

- **Language**

Another important indicator of the school culture is the common language used throughout the school, which can be a powerful indicator of a school's inclusive culture, especially in relation to students with SEN (Booth, 2000; Ballard, 2003). This can be demonstrated by the use of the term 'special needs', which suggests a separation between typically developing peers and students with SEN. This term has negative connotations and supposes that these individuals are somehow lacking in value or are fundamentally different from their peers (Ainscow, 2000). Although the term 'special education' is widely used, a study conducted in England in 2002 found that the way in

which special education is conceptualised is problematic and brands ‘special needs’ a roadblock to true inclusivity in education, since it has no productive contribution to make to the inclusive education agenda (Corbett, 2002).

Furthermore, Kluth (2010) identified characteristics common to school cultures that are supportive of inclusive education. One of the main characteristics identified was the language regularly used by teachers when talking about students, which was found to reflect the philosophy of inclusive education; for example, the use of the term ‘our or my students’ vs. ‘your students’ and the use of terms that indicate special classes within the school, such as ‘special units’ or ‘attached special units’ (Kluth, 2010). The use of such discriminative language also affects the students’ sense of belonging, as it indicates that they do not belong in general education but are instead in an institution whose name matches their categorisation: in this case, special schools or institutions. Hansen and Childs (1998, p.15) described schools with a positive school culture as ‘a place where students and teachers like to be’. Therefore, an environment that categorises individuals negatively, tying their identity solely to their needs, is unlikely to be a place where they like to be, nor would it be a place where they would feel a sense of belonging. This is, therefore, related to the wider cultural attitudes towards disability, including how it is referred to in the language.

The associated values and meanings attributed to terms referring to those with SEN are likely to influence people’s perceptions of inclusivity. Therefore, any change in behaviour towards disabled students should also be accompanied by a change in the language used in discussion around these issues related to students with SEN and inclusion. This transformation starts from the ‘core’ of the mainstream schools, as Starratt (2010) puts it when discussing the Onion Model of school culture. Inclusive

language is the language that is not ‘prejudiced, discriminatory or exclusionary’ (Walton, 2015, p. 2). It is an ideology and, most importantly, it is a medium for inclusive education. Inclusive language not only reflects the inclusive culture of the school, it also shapes it. Therefore, it should be present in different layers of the Onion Model, for example in the activities, programmes and policies of the school.

To conclude this section on inclusive culture in schools setting, the inclusive culture of school has been discussed through the use of Onion Model of school culture. It discussed a number of important pillars that are essential in establishing inclusive culture in mainstream schools to promote the inclusion of students with SEN. This included the role of head teachers, because they have the power to make changes in the school culture, as their role is clear in all the aspects represented by the Onion Model. The role of teachers is equally important, because they are in direct contact with the students with SEN and therefore their attitudes are important in promoting inclusion. Head teachers and teachers largely contribute to the creation of an inclusive environment, which is also supported by the use of inclusive language that reflects positive attitudes and ways of thinking. Similarly important is the collaborative relationship between school members, including the collaboration between head teacher and teachers and between teachers themselves, which is reflective of the school's wider culture. As teachers are the pillar upon which inclusive education is based, it is vital that they are equipped with the skills and the knowledge to face this challenge successfully. This is what makes teachers’ professional development a basic need in creating an inclusive environment.

3.4.3 Professional Development

There are a number of different factors that contribute to enhancing the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. Amongst these are non-school factors, such as family and community, whereas others are in-school factors, whereby the teachers are considered a significant element in either promoting or hindering inclusion (OECD, 2005). Therefore, teachers' professional development is the cornerstone for the successful inclusive education of students with SEN (Fishman et al., 2003). According to Friend et al. (2010), teachers' professional development is a significant contributing factor that can lead to successful and sustainable inclusion. This is because, with the continuous development of the field of special education and the increase of including students with SEN in mainstream schools, the demands and accountability for student success has also increased. Showers et al. (1987) defined the term 'professional development' as a process with the purpose of increasing levels of knowledge to sustain and support new practice until it becomes embedded into daily practice.

Reviewing the relevant literature around the professional development of teachers for this research revealed three main areas, namely teacher and head teacher training (Showers et al. 1987; Avramidis and Norwich, 2002; Kristensen et al., 2003; Reid, 2005; Winter, 2006), access to human and physical resources (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002) and continuous supervision and monitoring (Hammad, 2002; Pfeffer et al., 2004), which are the most reported areas in the discourse on professional development in inclusive education. For the purpose of this research, therefore, the term professional development refers to initial teachers' training and subsequent professional training and qualification, the knowledge, skills and abilities to teach students with SEN in inclusive schools, having access to human and physical resources as well as the availability of continuous supervision and monitoring of the inclusive practices. This definition is

illustrated conceptually in Figure 3.2 as the framework for the aspect of professional development used in this research.

Figure 3.2: The Conceptual Framework for Professional Development

A growing body of evidence is accumulating to suggest that training, either pre-service or in-service training lies at the centre of effective inclusive education. For example, a representative view in this respect was outlined by Carrington et al. (2010), in their Australian study. In which it was stated that the perceptions, beliefs and proficiencies of educational practitioners are correlated with the nature and efficacy of inclusive education. This highlights the criticality of findings, such as those reported in Avramidis and Norwich (2002) literature review, which indicate that many educational practitioners, including teachers and head teachers, have not received training in inclusive education. As a result, their experiences in teaching students with SEN are persistently unsatisfactory, and their inability to address learner requirements almost always detracts from positive outcomes.

In fact, consensus has already been established that the degree to which educational personnel are trained in inclusive education correlates strongly with the success of the

inclusive education of students with SEN (Kristensen et al., 2003; Reid, 2005; Winter, 2006). Hence, it is evident that the lack of special education training, which in turn promotes ineffective skills and insufficient expertise, directly contributes to practitioners' inability to provide inclusive and quality education (Shade and Stewart, 2001; Pearson et al., 2003; Lifshitz et al., 2004; Leatherman and Niemeyer, 2005; Dupoux et al., 2005; Romi and Leyser, 2006).

Over the past twenty years there has been an increase in research studies focusing on the relationship between attitudes and the need for professional development (Hammond and Ingalls, 2003; Burstein, et al, 2004; Wilkins and Nietfeld, 2004; Sari, 2007; Tschannen-Moran and McMaster, 2009; Kennedy and Shiel, 2010). As mentioned earlier in this chapter (section 3.4.2), teachers' negative attitudes are a strong contributor to the lack of schools' inclusive cultures. These negative attitudes have often been linked to a lack of knowledge and training (Shade, and Stewart, 2001; McLeskey, and Waldron, 2002; Conderman, and Johnston-Rodriguez, 2009).

In a research in Serbia, Avramidis and Kalyva (2007) reported predominantly negative attitudes towards inclusive education for students with SEN; however, teachers who were trained in SEN pedagogy and practices demonstrated a general willingness to accommodate students with SEN in mainstream schools. Similarly, in another research by Koutrouba et al. (2008) it was reported that teachers who had been exposed to SEN training during the initial teacher training viewed the inclusion of students with SEN more positively. It was also reported that a key determinant of teachers' teaching style as well as their adaptivity to diverse learning environments and level of endorsement for inclusive education is the nature of the SEN training that they have received (Vaz et al., 2015).

It might be argued therefore that, teachers who have received qualification and training in special education are more likely to have different perceptions with regard to students with SEN compared to their counterparts in general education who had no qualification and training in special education (Van Reusen et al., 2001). However, a Dublin-based study by O'Gorman and Drudy (2011) found evidence to suggest that special education teachers have similar needs regarding training as do general education teachers who have never before had training. This was attributed to the unsatisfactory level of the current or previous training for special education teachers, as argued by O'Gorman and Drudy (2011).

One way to address major concerns among teachers regarding the diversity of students with SEN requirements was proposed by Abbott (2007), whose findings were from another research in Ireland, promoting the implementation of a practically oriented pre-service training scheme, which, it was argued, would limit the 'culture shock' to which underprepared yet newly qualified teachers are exposed when they enter the profession. Preparedness had earlier been emphasised by Winter (2006), who argued that successful completion of a teacher education programme and pre-service training is only the first step to professional efficacy and suggested that effective pre-service training schemes must be paired with ongoing in-service professional development schemes. Roach and Salisbury (2006), in the United States, also emphasised the way in which long-term in-service training programmes constitute the only way in which meaningful institutional change can be facilitated.

The need for a standardised yet broadly relevant and practicable approach to inclusive practice was stressed by UNESCO (2009). Notably, UNESCO echoed many of the findings in the existing literature about inclusion regarding the criticality of training,

and it reiterated the relationship that exists between teacher training and the outcomes for students with SEN. Above all, the document highlighted the fundamental role played by teachers in inclusive education, consequently emphasising the centrality of pre-service and in-service training to any future initiatives. Given the significant importance of teacher preparation as the main factor in promoting successful inclusion, the absence of this factor creates an obstacle to this success, as without trained and qualified staff, inclusion is unlikely to be effective. Hence, it is important to focus on teachers' professional development in the KSA context and whether this facilitates inclusion as perceived by Saudi special education teachers.

Essential elements to professional development involves continuous supervision and monitoring, which are required to empower teachers to have a stronger belief and confidence in their skills and teaching practices and to support their development over time (Kennedy and Shiel, 2010). This is because, in general, the purpose of supervision as an educational process is to achieve better quality education through focusing on the processes, methods and procedures that underlie both successful teaching and successful learning (Hawkins and Shohet, 2012). Supervision of teachers comprises learning about the practices of teachers in order to develop their professional competencies and teaching practice via collaborative discussion (Hawkins and Shohet, 2012). This is particularly important to the development of inclusive practices which entails an in-depth understanding of the nature of inclusion and teachers' capacity to think about their own teaching methods and practice in a reflective way. This is claimed to be critical in improving the overall performance as reported in a more recent research by Alila et al. (2016) in Finland.

In addition, according to Hobson et al. (2009) supervision functions as a means of guiding and monitoring teachers, providing them with advice and new skills in their field of work, which ensures that they can improve their teaching skills and develop themselves in teaching students with SEN. In KSA, Hammad (2000), earlier argued that the importance of continuous and effective supervision also lies in its role as a link between the educational field and other responsible educational bodies, including LEAs and the Ministry of Education, as it provides them with information about the practice and its needs and development, in light of any decisions that are made. Hence, it is important to explore Saudi special education teachers' views about the extent to which they receive support and feedback from special supervisors in terms of their practices and needs as well as the extent to which special education supervisors actively work in linking schools with the LAEs and Ministry of Education by reporting school practices, needs and development and whether this communication is sufficient to promote inclusion.

Another significant element in professional development is the availability of human resources in schools. These resources include specialists such as physiotherapists, speech therapists, psychologists and special supervisors (Florian and Becirevic, 2011). Access to this support is not only beneficial for teachers but also facilitates students' progress and ultimately ensures the success of inclusion. This had been previously demonstrated by Mastropieri and Scruggs (2010), who showed how students with SEN outcomes are positively affected by engagement with specialist human resources such as speech therapists. A similarly critical determinant of effective inclusive education practices is the capacity of teachers to access physical and human resources at the classroom and school levels. In a review of the literature conducted by Avramidis and Norwich (2002), it was shown that teachers tend to perceive fewer difficulties in an

inclusive lesson plan when access to physical and human resources is readily available. Of these human resources, are the SENCO, who provides guidance for the school leadership team and staff on effective practice in implementing inclusion and works with teachers to make decisions about individual students (Dyson et al., 2004). They typically have the day-to-day lead and models effective practice, and is increasingly involved in promoting and delivering training for partnership working with parents (Lewis and Ogilvie, 2002). The role of the SENCO in the UK is similar to the role of the special needs supervisor (RSES) in KSA.

RSES in the context of KSA is used to refer to teachers who have high qualifications in special education and are in the position of special education supervisor but based at a particular school. This residential specialist teacher is responsible not only for monitoring the process of educating students with SEN but also, s/he undertakes the task of selecting adequate resources to suit the needs of students with SEN, identifying the correct means of approaching future inclusive schools, organising in-service training, support and advice for both the general and special education teachers, not only for schools in which s/he is located but also nearby schools. In addition to these responsibilities, the specialist also functions as a link between teachers and the higher administration level; for example, s/he will get the right furniture, equipment and educational aids to the school in the required time frame (Ministry of Education, 2002). A survey research by (Pearson et al., 2015) in England, found that, better inclusive schools are more likely to be achieved with the increased involvement of SENCO's in supporting and training staff. In conjunction with this, access to appropriate teaching materials, resources and facilities has been found to enhance educational outcomes for students with SEN, whilst positively affecting the attitudes of general education teachers (Avramidis and Kalyva, 2007; Koutrouba et al., 2008).

Hence, teacher professional development is essential for enhancing inclusive education. Teachers are in direct and face-to-face interaction with students with SEN and they should be prepared, trained and equipped with the required knowledge and skills to meet the needs of these students. However, the point that has a priority over this is that teacher education needs to focus on preparing teachers for potential challenges rather than just providing them with rhetorical curriculum that conceptualises teacher training merely as a narrow and specific discipline. It is clear, therefore, that the preparation for change to enhance inclusive education occurs not only by preparing teachers and other school staff but should also be in terms of the whole organisational system of the mainstream school, that is, by providing the required and sufficient human and physical resources. Hence, this is an important aspect to consider in the KSA context because the shortage of any of these elements poses a significant obstacle to inclusive education. Another fundamental aspect in successful inclusion is the relationship between the school and the family and the extent to which parents are involved in their children's learning. In the context of this research, this is an extremely important issue considering that in KSA, family involvement with the school is limited and not sufficiently encouraged (Faour, 2012).

3.4.4 Parents of Students with SEN and their Involvement with School

Parents' involvement is defined as 'the participation of parents in regular two-way and meaningful communication, involving student learning and other school activities' (Mitchell, 2014, p. 81). Parents' involvement with schools is a key in promoting the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools, and the success of any educational setting with regard to inclusion depends largely on communication between teachers and parents, as well as with the wider community, as effective inclusion

involves implementation both in school and in society at large (UNESCO, 2005; Tutt and Williams, 2015).

The importance of parents' involvement has always been an important topic in inclusive education practices (Braley, 2012; McDermott-Fasy, 2009). For example, Pomerantz et al. (2005) stressed the positive effects of parents' involvement and support in their children's learning and the home environment role in boosting children's learning. In a longitudinal study carried out in the US, it was concluded that there was a correlation between the parents' involvement in activities supporting children with SEN and their achievement (National Center for Special Education Research, 2007). A study based on reviews and meta-analysis yielded the result that parental involvement plays a significant role in the academic achievement of disabled children (Cox, 2005; Pomerantz et al. 2007).

The impact of parents' involvement is reflected in students with SEN improved attitudes, attendance and behaviour at school in addition to improvements to their mental health (Christenson, 2004). Moreover, parents' involvement in their children with SEN education has been found to improve the parent-teacher relationships, the school climate and the teachers' morale. With their involvement in their children with SEN education, parents gain confidence and satisfaction, whilst their interest in their own education is enhanced (de Boer and Munde, 2015). Several other studies around the world and over the years have also indicated similar reasons for parental involvement in a child's education (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Al-Kahtani, 2015), detailing the ways in which parents can become involved (Driessen et al., 2005; Lee and Bowen, 2006; Wanat, 2010) and how that involvement improves student outcome (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Mislan et al., 2009; Wanat, 2010).

Given the importance of parental involvement in enhancing the inclusion of students with SEN, it is not surprising that the relationship between parents of students with SEN and schools was one of the main matters emphasised in the laws, regulations and international agreements surrounding disability. For example, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (2004) in the US outlined the importance of parents as the overseers of education and the driving force behind achieving educational equality and inclusion. The IDEA and its related amendments express the belief that:

> *The education of children with disabilities can be made more effective by... strengthening the role and responsibility of parents and ensuring that families of such children have meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children at school and at home* (Javier, 2005, p.40).

The parent-teacher relationship for parents of students with SEN is more clearly prescribed by law than it is for families of other students, especially when it comes to articulating the student's IEP (Taylor et al., 2009). This can clearly be seen in the rights that have been guaranteed to parents in the IDEA (2004). Amongst these rights is the freedom to join any group which makes educational decisions relating to the students and to be involved in articulating the student's IEP, which must be put into place for any student with SEN (Javier, 2005). The IEP will contain a record of the student's current educational level as well as a set of goals and the requirements of the student in a classroom setting according to his/her needs. The IEP is articulated through meetings between parents and a multi-disciplinary team in order to create an educational plan for the student, which provides the greatest opportunity for family-school collaborative partnerships (Javier, 2005). In the context of KSA, chapter three of the RSEPI asserts the importance of increasing parental participation in the education of their children and clearly states their right to be a member of the multidisciplinary team around the child (Al-Kahtani, 2015). It is important, therefore, to consider whether Saudi special

education teachers acknowledge the importance of parental involvement in their children's education as a valued source of information and key to their child's success, and whether they encourage their participation in accordance with the RSEPI.

Despite the fact that parental involvement is highly important, there are some factors, which hinder this involvement. For example, the beliefs of parents towards factors related to inclusion can affect the degree to which the parents involve themselves in the education of their children (Elkins et al. 2003; Bradshaw et al., 2004; Salend, 2008). Research in New Zealand, has shown that parents who do not consider themselves able to aid their children academically did not involve themselves in school processes, due to their perception that they are not capable of creating positive change (Hornby and Lafaele, 2011). Similarly, Rock (2000) earlier argued that, despite parents' willingness to engage in their child's education, a number of parents believed that they lacked the knowledge about the educational requirements of their child compared to the teachers, and this made them less confident and made them hesitate at the prospect of participating in their child's education. In KSA, Al-Twaijri (2007) has suggested that the most significant contributory factor preventing parental involvement is a failure to understand their own capacity to be a part of their child's education, as they do not consider themselves able to enact positive change. This lack of confidence among parents was attributed to a variety of factors, particularly a low parental educational level, as parents felt that they did not possess sufficient academic proficiency to aid their child's learning (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Al-Kahtani, 2012; Al-Dosari and Pufpaff, 2014).

The way in which a parent views their child's potential to learn is another critical issue which can prevent or minimise parental engagement. Some parents hold the belief that

the ability and intelligence of their child is fixed and that their involvement in education would not make any real difference to their child; therefore, involvement with the school is not a priority for them (Al-Dosari and Pufpaff, 2014). Another issue that might prevent parents' involvement is related to the socio-cultural definition of disability, which makes parents feel stigmatised by their child's disability and they do not want to do anything about it. This social stigmatization leads parents to experience social isolation and emotional stress (Norris and Collier, 2018). Therefore, parent-teacher and school collaboration aids parents to overcome the social barriers and become involved in planning for their children's future. Dakwa et al. (2014) argued that some parents of disabled children may isolate themselves because of their feelings of shame and guilt. They also may withdraw from society, friends and activities. This is related to the socio-cultural definition of disability and disabled people, as some cultures view disability as a lack of control, death and vulnerability (Graham, 2014). However, collaborating with the school provides parents with knowledge and education through parents evening, meetings and workshops, where parents are not only enlightened with information about their children but can also share their concerns. Through the links with school, parents meet with other parents and can share the feelings, showing them that they are not alone (Hornby, 2011).

Whilst some researchers have attributed the problem to the parents themselves, others have argued that a large part of the reason is related to the school culture and the teachers' attitudes and their role in encouraging parents to involve in their children's education and initiate this relationship. For example, the findings of the family study by Francis et al., (2016) in different parts of the United States, showed that, a positive school culture, based on inclusive beliefs, values, and attitudes, led to respectful and caring behaviours of all school members. The researchers further reported that such a

positive culture highly contributed to a school commitment to meeting the students' needs in the general education, which in turn helped parents of students with SEN feel a stronger sense of belonging in the school community. In this regard, Mittler, (2012) also argued that, teacher attitudes towards parental involvement play a key role in promoting or hindering effective partnership. Bæck (2010, p. 323) earlier argued that it is the teachers who actually define the nature of the relationship between home and school:

> *Teachers are in a position to either destroy or maintain the traditional barrier that exists between home and school, and teachers' interest, attitudes and competence regarding home-school cooperation is crucial for its success*.

Further, Similarly, Cramer (2006), earlier suggested that teachers play a vital role by providing support to parents. This comes in the form of resources, overseeing the educational plans and encouraging parents to carry out their parent-educator role effectively. This is because, if teachers and parents are working as separate units, then co-ordinated collaboration is going to be difficult to promote and maintain (Braley, 2012). Teachers and parents need to communicate with each other actively for the purpose of making decisions, sharing ideas, to plan the IEP programme and to discuss ways of improving student performance (Taylor et al., 2009). Because of these demands, therefore, communication between teachers and parents needs to be in a variety of forms and should not be one-dimensional (Taylor et al., 2009).

Another barrier that hinders parents' involvement is that, many school professionals have limited knowledge or support to partner effectively with families, especially those they consider hard to reach parents (Blue-Banning et al., 2004; Hill and Taylor, 2004). Within the same argument, the low expectation on the part of teachers with regard to the value of parents in promoting their students' learning has a negative effect. For

example, Al-Kahtani (2015), noted that in some cases parents are discouraged from participating in their child's schooling due to the attitudes of teachers, who sometimes undermine the value of parent contributions and create a barrier to involvement. According to Wolfendale (2013), one of the biggest mistakes that occur in this context is that teachers assume that the parent-teacher relationship is that of an expert posture and not a collaborative one. Moreover, the authors from the United States, Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005), further argued that, parental involvement diminishes when it is not perceived as being appreciated by staff, and parents may be discouraged from involving themselves in their child's education due to the worry that their contributions are neither wanted nor required.

A number of authors such as Carlisle et al. (2005) and Friend and Cook (2017) argued that, therefore, teachers and other members of the school should acknowledge the importance of the family-school relationship. They should establish collaborative and interactive relationships with parents in individualised ways. Epstein (2011), indicated that direct and explicit encouragement by teaching staff will significantly raise the level of parents' contribution, as teachers who have a positive and an encouraging attitude with regard to parental input tend to receive more frequent and useful offers of support and involvement from parents. This has also been reported by Pena (2000, p.52), who asserted that the best teachers are those who 'make the parent feel more welcome'. This research here is, therefore, an attempt to explore the relationship between parents and special education teachers in mainstream inclusive school in KSA. This will be done by collecting information from special education teachers by asking them questions about the role of parental involvement in their children's education and the activities that the school conducts to deepen parental involvement and the challenges which prevent parental involvement.

Parent-teacher relationships are highly important for schools to be successful, and these depend upon teachers being skilled communicators. A number of strategies that practitioners can use to communicate effectively with parents have been suggested by parents' partnership researchers. According to Graham-Clay (2005), communication between parents and teachers can take the form of either one-way or two-way exchanges; one-way communication refers to information provided by teachers regarding school initiatives, activities and achievements in the form of newsletters, website posts, and calls or notes to the family home. The second method, two-way communication, is a reciprocal information exchange between staff and parents during phone calls, parent evenings and other on-site parent activities. Parent conferences are the most common form of two-way communication in many schools, as they provide a platform for face-to-face communication (Graham-Clay, 2005).

Written communication, whether in the form of a letter such as home-to-school notebook or an email, can be considered the most efficient way to foster an exchange between parents and staff (Hall et al., 2003). The use of school planners or homework diaries can also facilitate one-way or two-way communication, as teachers can share information about academic progress with parents on a regular basis; this is particularly useful for students who struggle academically, as they can then receive the extra support they require at home (Hall et al., 2003; Cramer, 2006). Two-way communication using this method is critical in order for the parents to provide feedback on teacher comments (Davern, 2004). Integrating technology, with its various applications, can also facilitate instantaneous communication from teachers to parents (Sykes, 2014). Teachers should actively incorporate one-way and two-way strategies together to maximise the sharing of information with parents and to promote more effective parent involvement and, thereby, enhance inclusion (Hall et al., 2003).

A review of existing strategies for enhancing parental involvement is helpful in this research investigating in the Saudi context since these help in improving family-school relationships and eventually enhance the inclusive education of students with SEN and the development of inclusive schools. It is essential, therefore, that there should be collaboration between teachers and parents of students with SEN because this helps both sides to overcome the barriers that can be created otherwise. As shown previously, there is a large body of evidence that suggests that effective inclusive education and the achievements of students with SEN at school have increased as a result of parent-school collaboration. However, as previously mentioned, the empirical evidence about teacher-parent collaboration, its impact, and indeed any contemporary, independent evidence about inclusion in KSA remains limited. Consequently, this research gives particular attention to teacher-parent collaboration as a key factor in enhancing inclusion of students with SEN in KSA. The fourth aspect of the research focuses on typically developing peers' interactions with and acceptance of students with SEN who are included in the same school and/or classroom. This is significant for this research, as they are another important group of stakeholders in inclusion and could either facilitate or obstruct its success; however, they seem to have been overlooked in the context of KSA (Al-Khateeb et al., 2016).

3.4.5 Typically Developing Peers' Interactions with Students with SEN

The success of the inclusion of students with SEN substantially depends on the collaboration of various social agents, including typically developing peers, who play a substantial role in the lives of students with SEN. Peers, as social agents, are responsible for the creation of a favourable social environment, in which one of the key factors is a positive acceptance. Research by Reina and Alvaro-Ruiz found that peers

played an important role as personal facilitators for the engagement of students with SEN in educational and related activities. A number of earlier studies have reported the benefits of this interaction, which includes supporting the development of communication skills (Fisher and Meyer 2002), academic outcomes (Hunt et al. 2003), social skills and social interaction (Cole and Meyer 1991) as well as contributing to the students' emotional well-being (Carter, 2010).

Equally, in a more recent study in Spain, Reina and Alvaro-Ruiz (2016) argued that among the variety of obstacles that affect inclusion is the social environment, in particular the absence of acceptance and interactions from typically developing peers form an environmental barrier for students with SEN. This is because if the students with SEN are segregated from their peers and their opportunities for social interaction become limited, they are unlikely to observe appropriate social behaviours in social settings and therefore their social skills are less likely to develop; these skills are essential for them, both when learning in school and later in life (Holahan and Costenbader, 2000; Peters, 2004). Hence, regular and sustained interaction should be a priority in inclusive education, which should provide students with SEN with opportunities to cultivate their social skills through observing others in social situations and generalizing these to all the situations of life they come across (Strain et al., 2001; Gupta et al., 2014). The research undertaken here, therefore, focuses on the current situation in mainstream Saudi girls' schools in terms of interaction between typically developing peers and students with SEN as an important aspect that could promote or hinder inclusion, as perceived by special education teachers. It also considers what obstacles special education teachers face in encouraging the students' interaction, which eventually hinder inclusion, as well as what has been done to encourage this interaction and promote their inclusion. Within this research, peers' interaction refers

to the engagement of students with SEN and typically developing peers in the school's activities or events, either inside or outside classroom. This interaction includes peer acceptance, interaction and possibilities for friendships (de Boer et al., 2013).

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, this research focuses on female teachers in girls' schools in KSA. Nowicki and Sandieson (2002) found that the gender of respondents is a significant factor in the development of relationships between typically developing peers and students with SEN. They reported that girls had more positive attitudes than boys toward peers with SEN. Bebetsos et al. (2014), however, found that female students and their male peers were equally responsive and collaborative towards students with SEN. Similar comparison studies between genders are limited in the context of KSA. This is due to the cultural restrictions in terms of gender, where schools in KSA are separated according to gender. Being a female researcher limits the ability to reach boys' schools and involve male special education teacher s in this research. Therefore, this research focused only on girls' schools and involved only female teachers. This, however, has created an opportunity for further research with a similar focus but on male teachers and therefore allowing for comparison between both genders.

Student interaction needs a supportive environment in which both students are interacting. According to Walker (2008), a supportive environment is paramount for successful social engagement because it offers students with SEN the opportunity to interact with their peers. Indeed, a supportive environment that encourages meaningful participation of students with SEN through social interaction with other typically developing students is important to develop their emotional and social as well as intellectual skills. Despite the fact that the environment where the students interact is

essential for the enhancement of their positive interaction, it is not enough by itself. The environment only offers physical access to students with SEN, but their interaction should be encouraged and facilitated, either by an adult or the typically developing students. This is because students with SEN do not usually initiate social interactions (Guralnick et al., 2007; Kwon et al., 2011). This, therefore, raises the question about where the teacher is and what his/her role is. In fact, the role of the teacher is so central to this interaction and could be anything from monitoring the interaction to intervening when there is a need for adult intervention.

According to Mitchell (2014), the role of the teacher is extremely vital to the development of the child as they should be able to create a conducive, comfortable, educative and challenging atmosphere for these children, for the purpose of both learning and socialisation. Previously, Harper et al. (2008) had argued that teachers play a vital role in facilitating healthy and safe interactions between students by teaching the play skills necessary for the interaction, whilst their job is also to set up a proper playing environment that supports efficient socialisation which eventually promotes inclusion. According to an earlier UK based research on the impact of various forms of school interaction on the attitude of typically developing peers toward their counterparts with SEN, Maras and Brown (2000), emphasised that the need for teachers to abolish stereotypical assumptions is key to fostering positive relationships between typically developing peers and students with SEN. This is because they found that one of the primary challenges that are facing the inclusion of students with SEN is the stereotypes held by typically developing peers which are generalised and attributed to their peers with SEN. It is of great significance for teachers, therefore, to educate and raise awareness among typically developing students regarding these stereotypes. This is

because eliminating these generalised stereotypes is the right place to start progressing towards more inclusive schools' environment.

In a later study in Georgia, by Javakhishvili (2012), it was reported that, teachers are vital in facilitating children interactions by creating situations that give students the opportunity to interact with each other, where they learn to exchange ideas, model positive behaviours and solve problems. Similar view was reported in a more recently in the United States, in which Vivanti et al. (2017), argued that, in order for positive interaction to take place between typically developing students and students with SEN, the teacher must act as a facilitator in the activities in order for learning and socialisation to take place for education and participation. Hence, the importance of this research under taken here, is that it focuses on teachers' perspectives as the ones who are responsible for encouraging and facilitating their students' positive interaction.

In fostering the interaction between typically developing peers and students with SEN and promoting inclusion, Gillies (2007) argued that, in establishing and fostering positive interactions between both typically developing students and students with SEN, teachers' skills and knowledge are of a particular importance in fostering the relationships between students. This involves the knowledge and skills for planning collaborative opportunities, choosing the type of tasks required; expectations for student behaviour; individual and group responsibilities. The lack of skilled teachers is, therefore, forming an obstacle to effective inclusion (Gillies, 2007). This is confirmed by a study by Beacham and Rouse (2012), in Aberdeen, where he reported that, one of the greatest barriers to the development of students' interaction and eventually to the inclusion of students with SEN, is the lack of the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to do so. This, in fact, further confirms the need for professional development

for teachers in prompting inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools, as discussed earlier in this chapter 3.4.3.

Encouraging the positive interactions between students should start as early as possible. Research evidences from different contexts, including the UK (Blackburn, 2016; Dyson, 2005) Turkey (Diken et al., 2016), Hong Kong (Lee at al., 2015) and the Middle East (A-Darab'h et al., 2015) suggest that, typically developing children who were provided with inclusive education in their early years of life are more open to learning and change and are more likely to develop tolerance, understanding and positive attitudes towards peers with SEN. Similarly, Ogelman and Secer (2012, p. 173) argued that, 'children become open to learning and change, and with their flexible point of view they are able to empathize with their peers have special educational needs, they develop tolerance and understanding towards their peers with special educational needs during inclusion". Therefore, it is important for teachers to introduce students with SEN to their typically developing peers in this early stage in life by creating contact opportunities and conducting events or activities in which both students with SEN and typically developing peers participate, allowing them to interact and form friendships (Dyson, 2005). Since this research is conducted in primary schools in which students at an early age are included, the extent to which positive interaction between students at this age is encouraged is also important. This is because the benefits of their interaction are not only limited to the school context, but could also be generalised and extended outside the school (Gillies, 2007).

3.4.6 Summary of Chapter

In summary, the preceding review has explored the literature relating to the obstacles to inclusive education in several national and international contexts. Most of the studies

have focused on Western countries, which are importantly distinct from the context of this research here in the following ways: (i) cross-cultural variation; (ii) the national belief system regarding educational practices for students with SEN; and (iii) the specific educational programmes they offer. However, since findings from the international sphere and, moreover, from countries which have reported positive experiences of inclusive education, are valuable in developing an understanding, gaining knowledge and increasing awareness regarding inclusive education. Generally, this literature review has covered numerous sub-sections of the literature related to the topic of inclusion. The first part of the review presented a discussion around the model of disability, including a social and medical model as a framework for framing the discussion around special educational needs and inclusion as well as obstacles to the inclusion of students with SEN.

The second part of the literature review dealt with the term 'inclusion'. It discussed literature related to the debates surrounding the usage of the term. Following this, the human rights perspective of inclusion was examined. The third part of the literature review dealt more specifically with the literature discussing the obstacles to inclusion. It examined the inclusive culture of schools by focusing on key indicators of school culture. The discussion of the inclusive culture was based on Starratt's (2010) Onion Model of school culture. The model shows that school organisations, programmes, policies, purposes and assumptions are all determined by the culture which shapes all these stages, and thus any change in these stages should begin with the culture. Aspect of the professional development of staff, the involvement of parents of students with SEN and interactions with typically developing peers are also discussed as they are key to promoting the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. These aspects are therefore examined in the context of KSA to determine whether they facilitate or

hinder the inclusion of students with SEN, as perceived by special education teachers. The following chapter will present the methodological approach used in conducting this research.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology and procedures used to determine the obstacles to the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream primary girls schools in KSA. The first section of this chapter will outline the research approach, which is mixed methods, and the rationale for using mixed methods approach. The second section, however, will present the research design as well as the initial planning stages of the research, justify and substantiate the methodological choices that were made for this research. The third section explains the sampling strategy used in this research. This will be followed by discussion of both the structure and design of the research methods, discussing both the quantitative and qualitative methods, their structure, rationale, piloting and the procedures for the actual conduction of both methods. This will be followed by discussing the initial treatments and analysis of the collected data to the questionnaires and the interviews respectively. Finally, the ethical consideration for this research as well as the researcher's positionality will be presented.

4.2 Research Paradigm

In this research, using mixed methods does not mean combining or mixing different paradigms. This is because the research has adopted a pragmatic paradigm. The pragmatic philosophical paradigm presents a range of approaches that social science researcher uses to bypass the oppositions that have long persisted when utilising mixed methods approaches. Pragmatic paradigm assumes that reality is constantly renegotiated, debated, interpreted, and therefore the best method to use is the one which solves the problem (Crotty, 1998). According to Biesta (2010, p. 96), knowledge is regarded solely as a source of data pertaining to human behaviour and its consequences,

and as such, cannot illuminate ‘‘once-and-for-all truths’’. Contrastingly, through pragmatic paradigm researchers are eager to highlight how the knowledge claims of both positivists and constructivists contain valuable elements, which if combined, provide researchers with novel, powerful vantage points (Biesta, 2010).

In addition, in contrast to the objectivity and subjectivity in quantitative and qualitative research, respectively, pragmatism combines objectivism and subjectivism by utilising a variety of methods, some of which require direct engagement with participants, while with others placing the researcher at a certain distance from the participants (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). As such, the pragmatic paradigm is principally concerned with practicalities, the result of which is that both singular and multiple realities are generated from the utilisation of quantitative and qualitative methods to address research questions (Rorty, 1999; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011).

The pragmatic paradigm argues that, both quantitative and qualitative research are desirable when attempting to answer the research questions adequately (Rocco et al., 2003). This steams from the pragmatic perspective here that the notion of ‘what works’ is well applied when selecting methods that best ‘work’ in answering the research questions (Creswell and Clark, 2007, p.60; Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007). Therefore, in this research to best answers the research questions, mixed methods approach has been utilised by combining both questionnaires and interviews to investigate obstacles to inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools in the KSA. This contributes to the central part that complementarity plays in the context of the pragmatist worldview, since the assertion is that when quantitative and qualitative methods are employed in concert, the respective weaknesses and strengths of each are mutually

complementary. Further discussion and justification are presented in the following sections.

4.3 Mixed Methods Approach

Mixed methods research refers to the type of research in which element from qualitative and quantitative approaches are combined (Creswell, 2014). For example, combining questionnaires and interviews in one single study for the purpose of breadth and depth of understanding and validation (Johnson et al., 2007; Creswell, 2014). This methodological approach allows the researcher to approach the research questions from a number of different angles in order that no aspect of it is neglected. In this research, teachers' perceptions about obstacles to the inclusion of students with SEN were, therefore, obtained by gathering both their verbal and written responses. The combination of questionnaires and interviews is considered more sophisticated than using one form of data collection alone. This is because combining both methods can bring together a more comprehensive account of the research problem (Mertens, 2014).

Research approaches are largely determined by the demands of the research questions and how best to answer them, whilst meeting the aims and objectives of the research (Creswell, 2014; Bryman 2015; Robson and McCartan, 2016). The primary goals for this research were, first, to explore the existing obstacles to the inclusion of students with SEN from the perspective of special education teachers, with regards to the research four main aspects, which are: the inclusive culture of mainstream schools where inclusion programmes are run, the provision of professional development for teachers and the availability of specialist support, the involvement of parents of students with SEN with school and the interactions of typically developing peers and students with SEN in the schools. This research also aimed to offer original contributions to this

area of research by providing further explanations and possible solutions to the identified obstacles to the inclusion in KSA and considers the steps required for improving its implementation. Given the above, the following research questions were proposed;

1- What are the obstacles facing the inclusion of girls with special educational needs (SEN) in primary mainstream schools in KSA from the perspective of special education teachers in terms of inclusive culture in schools?
2- What are the obstacles facing the inclusion of girls with special educational needs (SEN) in primary mainstream schools in KSA from the perspective of special education teachers in terms of the provision of professional development of teachers?
3- What are the obstacles facing the inclusion of girls with special educational needs (SEN) in primary mainstream schools in KSA from the perspective of special education teachers in terms of parents of students with SEN collaboration with school in order to promote inclusion of their children?
4- What are the obstacles facing the inclusion of girls with special educational needs (SEN) in primary mainstream schools in KSA from the perspective of special education teachers in terms of the interactions of typically developing peers with students with SEN?
5- Do participants' responses differ significantly based on geographical location in terms of the above four aspects?

Answering these research questions suggests a combination of both quantitative and qualitative research methods, often referred to as mixed methods (Creswell, 2014). Using mixed methods was used as it allows for methods to supplement one another and

not only benefit from the strengths of each method but also minimises the drawbacks of using a single approach alone, thereby increasing the validity of the research results (Creswell, 2014; Bryman, 2015). Quantitative methods are useful since they provide a large amount of data that is often more reliable and objective (Twycross, 2004; Creswell, 2014; Bryman, 2015). Beyond the benefits brought about by a quantitative method, a qualitative element is also of particular interest in this piece of research, as it can reveal important insights into attitudes and beliefs, as well as encouraging elaboration and providing clarity, in case responses are vague (Bryman, 2015). Further discussion about the advantages of each of the research methods are presented later in section 4.5.1 and 4.5.2.

Both questionnaires and interviews were combined in this research in order to obtain a comprehensive account of the area of inquiry and increase the depth of the findings by employing both quantitative and qualitative research (Creswell, 2014; Bryman, 2015). The mix of qualitative and quantitative methods also aims to eliminate gaps in the data collected to identify obstacles to inclusion. In other words, a mixed methods approach heightens the level of understanding of the research problem and allows the research questions to be answered in more depth (Gubrim and Holstein, 2000; Creswell, 2014; Mertens, 2014). Additionally, conducting research using mixed methods ensures that the researcher's vantage point is not limited, as using just one method may lead the researcher to believe that their narrow impression of the scenario is the entirety. The validity of the results is also bolstered, as multiple methods means a larger pool of results and therefore a wider capacity for comparison (Creswell, 2014). The following section discusses the specific mixed method design that has been used in this research and the rationale for using it.

4.4 Mixed Methods Design (Convergent Parallel Design)

Research design refers to the apparatus as a whole and how it is suited to address the questions and aims of the research. Creswell (2014, p.37) suggest four basic mixed methods designs, consisting of 'the convergent parallel design, the explanatory sequential design, the exploratory sequential design, and the embedded design'. Whilst each type has different data collection procedures, timings and purposes; this research used a convergent parallel design. This design is the most recommended, convenient and commonly used approach for researchers who are conducting mixed methods research (Creswell, 2014). The term convergent design refers to the simultaneous employment of quantitative and qualitative research approaches during roughly the same phase of the research process; under this design, each is employed with equal emphasis but findings are analysed separately, whilst drawing conclusions from the data allows for interpretation of the results from both methods (Creswell, 2014). Since this research focuses on four main aspects that are identified to be highly important for investigation in the context of KSA, these aspects were pre-determined themes for the investigation by both quantitative and qualitative method. Therefore, other designs such as sequential or multistage design was not necessary in this research (Creswell, 2014). In this research, therefore, the data was originally gathered and analysed separately. The two set of data were subsequently related, compared and interpreted in the discussion chapter (Creswell, 2014). Both instrument was given equal weight and was conducted at roughly the same time.

This design was used for a number of purposes that are; triangulation, completeness, credibility, sampling and illustration (Bryman, 2015). Triangulation enables the research results to be presented in a rigorous, complex and rich way that adds depth, credibility and validity to the research (Denzin, 2012). More importantly, it allows for

validation of the research results through cross-validation or corroboration of results from one strand (quantitative) with the other (qualitative) (Creswell, 2014). This is particularly important in this research given the fact that both instruments were conducted in the same phase and this therefore allows for confirming or deny the findings from one set of findings by the other set. Such advantages are necessary in fulfilling the aims of this research in order to convince the relevant stakeholders and decision-makers of the current obstacles hindering inclusion and possible necessity for promoting it especially when both instruments confirmed the same obstacles. This design was also used for the purpose of completeness, as collecting both data at the same time provides comprehensive understanding and more holistic view of the obstacles to inclusion in KSA mainstream school (Bryman, 2015; Blessinger, 2015). Illustration was another purpose in using this design, as collecting both data helped in illustrating and explaining each instrument's findings, often referred to as putting 'meat on the bones' of 'dry' quantitative findings (Bryman, 2006, p. 64). Another purpose is sampling, in which one method facilitate the sampling of the other method (Bryman, 2006). In this research, questionnaires facilitated obtaining sample of the interview, which will be discussed in further in section 4.5.2.

4.5 The Research Sample and the Sampling Techniques

The sampling strategy is essential element for any type of research (Patton, 2002). The sample for this research was comprised of female special education teachers in mainstream primary girls schools which had implemented an inclusion programme; these were taken geographically from the five main districts of KSA, namely the North, South, East, West and Central Districts. Special education teachers working in primary mainstream girls schools that have inclusion programme were chosen due to their

familiarity with the concept of SEN and inclusion. They were also considered to be the closest individuals to the situation who can see and feel the obstacles that hinder inclusion in mainstream schools. These teachers work in the environments most pertinent to the research questions, namely mainstream schools with students with SEN, and so are best placed to speak about the practicalities and specificities of inclusion.

This research made use of probability sampling, in which selection is random, ensuring that each individual has an equal probability of being chosen and therefore allowing for generalisability (Polit and Beck, 2010). Probability sampling comprised of a number of sampling techniques, such as simple random sampling, stratified random sampling, systematic random sampling and cluster and multi-stage cluster sampling (Kothari, 2004). Multi-stage cluster sampling is most commonly used in studies that spread over a large geographical area and since the current research is conducted over the whole of KSA, which is geographically large area, it was deemed appropriate to use this technique as to reach the research participants in different parts of the KSA.

In a multi-stage cluster sampling, a large cluster of population is divided into smaller clusters in several stages, in order to make data collection procedures manageable. This can be done in a number of stages (Jackson, 2011). First, the researcher chooses the sampling frame, which includes units or cases from which the researcher draws the sample. The investigator divides the total population in the first stage into clusters, which then can be divided into second stage clusters. If needed, the investigator can keep repeating the previous stage until the clusters are ready for the investigation (Jackson, 2011). In this research, the sample is spread over the KSA and, in order to reach the sample, KSA was divided into its main five districts: North, South, East, West and Central Districts. Within these five districts, there are twenty main cities. Two cities

from each district were randomly selected. These cities are shown in the table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1
Districts and Cities Involved in the Research

District	Name of Cities
North	Hail city – Al-Jouf city
South	Abha city- Jazan city
Central	Macca city- Madeenah city
East	Adamam city - Alahssa city
West	Riyadh city- Buraidah city

In order to choose the schools in each city, I obtained lists of schools that are running inclusion programmes in each of the selected cities from the Ministry of Education. Five schools from each city were also randomly selected. Although there is no available statistical data of the exact number of teachers in each school in KSA, I was informed when obtaining the lists of school, that the maximum number of teachers in inclusive school does not usually exceed ten teachers in each school. Based on that the targeted number was therefore the maximum number expected in the school which is ten. This allows to obtain the maximum number of teachers and achieve a representative sample. Therefore, five schools in each city, which were randomly selected, were given ten questionnaires to cover the maximum number of special education teachers in the school. All special education teachers in these schools had the chance to participate. The targeted number of participants in this research was 500 special education teachers but the response rate was 331 (66%), and was acceptable as it forms more than half of the total targeted number. Interviews sample, however, was a purposive sample and was drawn based on the participants' willingness to take part in the interview. Further discussion about interviews is presented in section 4.5.2 in this chapter. The following section discusses the distributing of the questionnaire and reaching the sample of the research.

4.6 Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures

This research aimed to identify the obstacles to the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream primary girls schools in KSA and therefore, reach a scientific result which will aid in drafting a set of recommendations for overcoming these obstacles and improving inclusive practices in mainstream schools in KSA. In order to achieve the research goals and to answer the research questions, a questionnaire was employed for gathering quantitative data, alongside the interview for gathering qualitative data.

4.6.1 The Quantitative Method of the Research (Questionnaires)

A questionnaire refers to any written series of questions to be answered, whether on paper or online; it can contain closed-questions, open-questions, or a combination of the two (Robson, 2011; Cohen et al., 2017; Thomas, 2017). It is not recommended, however, to conduct a questionnaire with exclusively open questions, as answers can become long and time-consuming, which may lead to impatience on the part of the participant and therefore giving unhelpful answers that are difficult to analyse (Robson, 2011). Therefore, questionnaires in this research used close questions that required teachers to reflect their level of agreement with the questionnaire items.

Questionnaires have been used in this research as they are useful in obtaining information as to opinions, attitudes, beliefs and concerns in a way which is relatively easy to analyse and which provides a base from which to collect quantitative results; it is also important as the representative views of the sample become clear from the data collected (Gillham, 2008). The choice to use a questionnaire for this research was based largely in its advantages for forming a sizable and varied sample (Robson and McCartan, 2016; Cohen et al., 2017). The research aimed to reach respondents throughout KSA and so a questionnaire was deemed the most appropriate instrument

to achieve this, as it can be distributed widely with relatively low costs. In this research, the questionnaire facilitated the collection of data from a geographically broad area, ensuring a larger sample size than might have been possible using any other tool and therefore allowing for generalising the results (Cohen et al., 2017).

In addition to capturing the views of large number of participants and providing a general view of what they think, believe and experience, questionnaires help in drawing correlation between the participants' responses and their geographical location. This was also important in this research, especially in order to answer the fifth research question; Do Saudi special education teachers' responses differ depending upon the geographical district in which they work? This is particularly important, as it is necessary to capture data relating to the participants' individual local contexts, which might have an influence upon their responses (Robson and McCartan, 2016). This is because the contexts have the potential to be variable, as each district implemented inclusion at different time, which consequently means that students might receive varying levels of support and provision. Second, even though policy and decisions come from one main department, that is the Ministry of Education, special education services are, however, provided by different local authorities in each district. For these reasons, this research will examine whether geographical variations impact the responses and, if so, to what extent.

Another benefit of gathering quantitative data using questionnaires is that they include a higher degree of anonymity and privacy, which may result in more honesty, due to the high level of confidentiality that written answers allow (Robson and McCartan, 2016). This is of particular importance in the context of KSA, as so the values of anonymity and confidentiality are highly regarded and need above all else to be upheld.

This is because such assurances, participants may be concerned that their names and responses would be made public and would therefore not be willing to express their personal opinions. Therefore, the questionnaire used in this research did not ask for any personal information that could be tracked or might lead participant identification, allowing for honest responses by teachers.

4.6.1.1 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire used in this research has been based on the Index for Inclusion Developing Learning and Participating in Schools, developed by Booth and Ainscow (2006). The Index is a document that is used as a resource for developing inclusive schools. It includes a number of questions and indicators that can be used in investigating obstacles to inclusion. The index was used because it is frequently and widely employed by researchers and is a validated instrument when measuring obstacles to inclusion. Although the Index not only focuses on children with SEN but rather all children and young people with different ethnicity, background and ability, for the purpose of this research it is used by focusing only on students with SEN as it is the focus of this research. To my knowledge, the Index has not been used in the context of KSA and therefore, this research is the first to use items and indicators from the Index to investigate obstacles to inclusion in the context of KSA. I, therefore, modified some statements by excluding some parts, adding others and modifying the wording of some questions in order to fit the culture and circumstances of the context of the participants, as well as in accordance with the purpose of the research.

Some of the modifications made to the selected items from the index included refocusing statements from a general inclusive perspective to a more specific focus on the inclusion of children with SEN. For example, I changed ‘all students with different

ethnicity, background and ability' to read as only 'students with SEN'. Other modification was in regard to the suitability of the questions to the context of the research. For example, statements such as 'Is the culture of the school equally supportive of boys' and girls' and 'Do staff and students avoid gender stereotyping in expectations about achievement' were excluded, given the fact that, in the context of this research, schools are separate in terms of gender. Modification was also about restating the item from being a (Yes, No) question as in 'Do staff avoid labelling children according to notion of ability' to be agree or disagree question where the statement becomes 'staff avoid labelling children according to notions of ability'.

In using the Index, Booth and Ainscow mentioned that, there is no right or wrong way of using the Index, but researchers can dip in and out in the Index according to the focus of the research. The Index provides a framework from which researchers can think about developing inclusive schools by identifying obstacles to the inclusion of students with SEN and their participation in the schools (Booth and Ainscow, 2006). The questionnaire for this research has two main parts. Section one asks for the demographic information of the respondents. Section two of the questionnaire included 24 items which were divided into the four main research aspects;

1. Inclusive culture of school.
2. The provision of professional development for teachers.
3. The involvement of parents of students with SEN with school.
4. The interaction of typically developing peers with students with SEN.

Each aspect contained six statements which, in total, represented 24 items, some of which were positively worded, whereas the majority of the items is negatively worded as they represent obstacles. A five-point Likert-type scale allows teachers to select their degree of agreement with the statements from (strongly agree to strongly disagree).

Using Likert scales is more efficient and reliable, producing more consistent, quantitative data, as the participants' responses are measured on the same scale, which provided efficiency and reliability in the data obtained in this research (Fink, 2009).

The research questionnaire also included a number of other elements as per Thomas's (2017) suggestion. These include a brief information about the researcher as well as information about the research, its aims and purposes. In addition, a consent form in which participants are asked to give their consent to take part in the research and complete the enclosed questionnaire. Both forms assure participants about the anonymity and security of their responses (Thomas, 2017) (see Appendix 4 for the questionnaire and Appendix 5 for the interview). Further detailed discussion about ethical considerations of the research are presented later in section 4.7.

4.6.1.2 Questionnaire Piloting and Validity:

Prior to conducting the empirical research, it was important to pilot the research instruments. Pilot studies have many benefits for research. This is because, they help to fine-tune data-collection procedures, test-scoring techniques, and give the researcher useful insights into the appropriateness of standard measures. Van-Teijlingen and Hundley (2001) suggest that pilots have the added advantage of being able to add extra knowledge that enhances the full rollout version of the research. They can, for example, help to confirm validity and reliability of the research instruments, or provide clues as to unexpected findings from the research. Furthermore, the use of a pilot study allows for a trial of the statistical and analytical procedures that will follow the collection of the data, so that the researcher can be sure that the data can be evaluated in the best way and turned into meaningful and insightful statistics (Bryman, 2015). Moreover, if there is a weakness or problem, then a pilot allows modifications to be made to the data-

collection methods, in order to rectify those issues prior to conduct the imperial research (Thomas, 2017).

To ensure the questionnaire validity, it was given to three professors who specialise in special education and teaching in the School of Education at Aljouf University. The first was Prof. Heeam Fathy, the second was Prof. Ameen Mohammed Sabry Noor Aldeen and the third was Dr. Hebah Nabil. I asked each professor to go over the questionnaire and provide feedback on its comprehensibility, simplicity, suitability and appropriateness to the Saudi context and for addressing the research questions. The final version of the questionnaire was also discussed with my supervisor for any further modifications or amendments. Overall, there were no significant issues concerning the questionnaire items.

In this research, the participants are Arabic speakers and therefore it was essential to translate the English questionnaire into Arabic. It was first proofread and checked and then professionally translated into Arabic. Two translators who hold degrees in linguistics from UK-based universities assisted in the translation of the questionnaires. After this process, the Arabic translation was finalised and was sent to 18 special education teachers in KSA to answer and review it to check the feasibility and clarity of the Arabic version. All of the feedback provided was applied to the creation of the final form of the questionnaire. Revisions included primarily minor question rewording and providing more clarifying statements. Moreover, the internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using the Alpha Cronbach reliability test which will be discussed in the following section.

4.6.1.3 Reliability of the Questionnaire

The term reliability is usually used to refer to the consistency or stability of a set of results (Johnson and Christensen, 2004; Hair et al., 2005; Gay et al., 2009). Reliability was sought in the current research through the careful formation of the questions in the questionnaire, in order to ensure all participants understood what they are being asked. In order to test for reliability, Cohen et al. (2017) suggest that a concurrence in results across a research over time tends to point to a high reliability. This may be achieved using the 'Alpha Cronbach coefficient reliability test', which provides a measure of the overall reliability of the research instrument by assigning a correlation value (Gillham, 2008). Ranging between 0 and 1, the nearer to one the figure ends up, the more reliable the process. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire in this research was computed to be 0.71; this indicated acceptable reliability of the instrument according to Cronbach's alpha (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011). Table 2 below represents the Cronbach's alpha for each aspect.

Table 4.2
Reliability coefficient for questionnaire items

Aspect	Number of Items	Cronbach's alpha
Inclusive Culture of School	6	0.69
Professional Development	6	0.70
Parental involvement	6	0.70
Typically Developing Peers' Interactions with Students with SEN	6	0.70
All items	24	0.71

The reliability coefficient of items in each of the questionnaire aspects in this research was computed and found to be more than 0.60; this indicated an acceptable reliability of the instrument according to Cronbach's alpha (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011).

4.6.1.4 Questionnaire Distribution

Data was collected over a number of procedures, beginning with an authorisation letter from the Ministry of Education for each participating school, authorising the research and the researcher, and asking for assistance in conducting the research and completing the questionnaires. This letter called, in KSA context, 'Research Facilitation Letter', 'خطاب تسهيل مهمة باحث'. Obtaining this letter in the context of KSA is a formal procedure that researchers need to follow in order for the participating schools to be aware that the research being conducted is formally authorised. Schools are, therefore, more likely to collaborate with the researcher than without this letter.

The next step was to set up times and dates for the research to be conducted, and arranging for the questionnaires to be distributed in schools, and later returned. As the research was conducted over different districts of KSA, I had to travel to those nearly located cities in order to distribute the questionnaires and collect the data. Whereas the schools located in more distant areas, the General Secretary for Educational Research at the Ministry of Education in Riyadh assisted in the distribution process by sending the questionnaires to the LEAs of these cities, who, in turn, send them to the schools. I further contacted these schools to ensure that they had received the questionnaires and asking if any further information or explanation about the questionnaires are required and asking for estimated time of completion. This is because the follow up and reminder, as argued by Saunders et al. (2012), help to increase the response rate to the questionnaires, but ethically this was not overly undertaken as I did not want to put participant under further pressure.

Given the above, since the questionnaires were sent to them by the Mistry of Education, teachers might expect that questionnaires will then be returned to the Mistry of

Education and therefore, this might affect the honesty of responses. Therefore, to avoid any biased answers, it was, therefore, important to inform the teachers that the questionnaires will be returned to myself directly as they will be sent to my own address provided in the cover sheet of the sent questionnaires. Although this was stated in the cover sheet of the questionnaires, to further ensure that, I contacted those school and made sure that they had the appropriate address to which questionnaires needed to be sent. They were also further assured that their responses would be anonymous and would not be disclosed to any third party. The questionnaires that were distributed in person by me, when they had been completed, were then collected back in person by me.

4.6.2 The Qualitative Method of the Research (Interviews)

The second data collection method in this research was interview, which is usually used to explore the views, experiences, beliefs and motivations of individual participants in more open way, where the interviewer asks questions that guide the conversation to address the issue under study (Gill et al., 2008; Sandy and Dumay, 2011; Thomas, 2017). Interviews are useful in that they provide deep insights of the research problem and provide information that are contextually particular to the participant (Flick, 2014). This is not the case in the questionnaires as they do not always provide detailed information about the particular context of the participant, which is a strength brought about by the interviews.

Interviews, to be effective, required a high level of communication skills, including structuring the interview questions with clarity, listening attentively and the ability to probe and prompt appropriately (Clough and Nutbrown, 2007). Interviews can be structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Thomas, 2017). Semi-structured

interviews were utilised in this research as they allow for more flexibility in obtaining information by adding, omitting or modifying the interview questions based upon what the interviewer perceives as appropriate for the research as well as based on the responses of the interviewees (Robson and McCartan, 2016; Thomas, 2017). Semi-structured interviews also allow for the discovery or elaboration of information that is important to participants but may not have previously been thought of by the researcher (Gill et al., 2008; Robson and McCartan, 2016; Thomas, 2017)

In a semi-structured interview, the researcher should prepare the questions intended to be used in the interview. These questions ought to steer the interview in addressing the issues or topics identified in advance (Merriam, 2001). However, the format of the interview is not fixed, therefore allowing scope for additional questions to be introduced if required, should questions arise that were not previously considered (Robson and McCartan, 2016). In contrast to the questionnaire, which aims to collect precise and straightforward statistical data, an interview is useful for collecting data with more depth, as participants are encouraged to speak openly and honestly, with the option for researchers to ask for elaboration when needed (Thomas, 2017).

Another advantage of this method is that they provide an insight into the underlying rationale behind participants' responses. They also allow the researcher to ask questions and clarify responses as they seek to find out why and how certain issues arise (Robson and McCartan, 2016). This is particularly important in the current research, as they allowed for a comprehensive account from the participants about their perceptions about the challenges and obstacles hindering successful implementation of inclusion of students with SEN, any underlying reasons for these obstacles as well as seeking any recommendations and suggestion for improving the practice of inclusive education in

KSA. Obtaining such rich data will help to provide high quality feedback to those in leadership positions regarding what are the obstacles to the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. Following Bryman's (2015) suggestion, the interviews also employed easily understandable and practical language, and care was taken to ensure that they were unbiased as per Yin's (2009) advice, such as by asking the question 'how' instead of 'why' in order to reduce the possibility of defensive responses from the participants. Given that, the interview was designed in order to provide a pool of qualitative data to compare with, relate, confirm or reject the collected quantitative data from the questionnaires (Creswell, 2014).

4.6.2.1 Interview design

In connection with the research objectives and questions, the main interview questions guide (see Appendix 5) consisted of asking participants about obstacles to inclusion of students with SEN, mainly in terms of the four themes of the research that are listed below.

1. The school inclusive culture:

In which teachers were asked, from their experience as special education teachers who work in mainstream schools, about the extent to which their schools promote inclusion, the extent to which school members appear to understand inclusion, its meaning, principles and implications; as well as the extent to which their schools encourage the participation of students with SEN in all aspects of the school life. They were also asked about the overall attitudes towards and acceptance of the notion of inclusion, themselves as special education teachers and the students with SEN. In this theme, a number of elements from the Onion Model of school culture, that were presented and discussed in the Onion Model of school culture in the literature review in chapter Three,

were also taken into consideration. These include; leadership attitudes and support, general teachers' attitudes, relationships and collaboration with special education teachers and the language used in the school to describe children with SEN.

2. The provision of professional development for teachers and the availability of specialist support:

In which teachers were asked about the availability of an ongoing in-service training in the school for both general and special education teachers, as well as for schools' head teachers. This theme also considers the extent to which specialist support, guidance and consultation are available from within the school, for example via the school head teacher and the resident special education supervisor, or from outside the schools, such as, by special education supervisors and special education specialists from the LEA.

3. The involvement of parents of students with SEN with school:

The participants – special education teachers – were asked to provide information about the extent to which teachers think parents accept including their children with SEN in mainstream schools. More importantly, the extent to which parents communicate, collaborate with the schools and involve in their children's education, the form of this communication, how useful this communication is and how often such communication takes place. They were also asked to identify what underlying factors influence parents' collaboration and involvement with the school. The issue of how they deal with any obstacles relating to the lack of parents' involvement and negative attitudes was also addressed. This theme also considers what efforts made by schools to encourage parental involvement and what obstacles they face in this regard.

4. Interaction of typically developing students with peers with SEN in inclusive settings:

This theme concerns the interaction between typically developing students and their peers with SEN in the same schools and/or classrooms. From the special education teacher's point of view and from their day- to- day practices and observation, they were asked to provide information about how typically developing peers perceive their peers with SEN and the extent to which they accept and interact with them actively. They were also asked about the extent to which students with SEN benefit from being included and what obstacles they face in this regard. Teachers were also asked the extent to which students are encouraged to interact and what kind of opportunities are provided for promoting students' interactions. Finally, the issue of any obstacles they face in this regard and how they deal with them were also addressed. At the end of the interview, participants were asked to give their recommendations for actions they think should be taken in order to overcome the obstacles and promote inclusion. In all themes of the interview, a number of issues raised by the participants led to requests for more clarification by asking supplementary questions in order to gain more information. This will be presented in chapter Six, the qualitative findings.

4.6.2.2 Interview Piloting

The aim of the pilot test, with regard to the interview method of the research, was to ascertain whether or not the questioning style and the questions themselves were appropriate for the current research; the pilot study also helped to identify problems not considered previously (Van-Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001; Robson and McCartan, 2016; Thomas, 2017). I interviewed two Saudi female teachers, who are special education teachers working in different primary schools in KSA. Before beginning any pilot research, consent was obtained and the interviews scheduled; Interviewee 1 was interviewed face-to-face, whilst interviewee 2 was interviewed over the phone, due to

the geographical distance. The pilot interviews lasted approximately 25 minutes; after concluding the interview, I recorded and transcribed the questions and answers and sent a copy of the transcript to the interviewee, in order to allow them to confirm or reject the accuracy of the transcription and whether the transcripts reflected their opinions accurately. Both participants agreed on the accuracy of the recorded responses. The pilot study was also beneficial on a personal level, where it provided me with an opportunity to assess my ability to conduct interviews, such as the skills and techniques needed for interviewing effectively (Bryman, 2015).

4.6.2.3 Sample and Conduct of Interviews

The interview sample in this research was selected using purposive sampling in order to select the appropriate participants to this research (Robson and McCartan, 2016). Since this research aims to find out the obstacles to the inclusion of students with SEN in primary girls mainstream schools as perceived by special education teachers, the sample of the interview are special education teachers who are working in mainstream schools in KSA. The interview sample was based on the participants' willingness and consent to take part in the interview. This was done through invitation attached to the questionnaires in which participants are asked to indicate their willingness by ticking a box of an agreement to participate in the interview and to provide their contact details to be contacted by the researcher (Thomas, 2017). As an alternative mean of communication, my email address and mobile number were added in the questionnaires in order to give the participants who were willing to be interviewed but are concern about providing their details, the opportunity to contact me directly on my contact details.

The use of this strategy was useful in that, first, it reached the participants in different districts over a large geographical area, which would be difficult to achieve by other mean. This is particularly important for this research as it allowed for comparing teachers' views about obstacles to the inclusion of students with SEN in different districts in the KSA, and therefore to further confirm or reject the quantitative results of the differences between districts in this research (Robson and McCartan, 2016). Secondly, the participants are more likely to give deep information and enrich the data obtained from the questionnaires based on their familiarity with the research and its aims and objectives as they had already completed the questionnaires.

The targeted sample size for the interviews was 15 teachers that is two teachers from each district. However, eleven teachers indicated their willingness to take part in the interview and have submitted their contact details in order to be interviewed. Two of those teachers from each of the districts and three were from the Central district, which resulted in fortuitous geographical representation of all districts as shown in Table 4.3. Characteristics of the sample of interviewees are presented in the following table.

Table 4.3
Characteristics of the sample of interviewees

Teachers code	District	Years of experience	Qualifications
T1.N.D	North	5- less than 10 years	Bachelor in special education
T2.N.D	North	5- less than 10 years	Bachelor in special education
T3.S.D	South	10-less than 15 years	Diploma in special education
T4.S.D	South	5- less than 10 years	Bachelor in special education
T5.E.D	East	Less than 5 years	Bachelor in special education
T6.E.D	East	5- less than 10 years	Diploma in special education
T7.W.D	West	10-less than 15 years	Bachelor in special education
T8.W.D	West	More than 15 years	Masters in special education
T9.C.D	Central	10-less than 15 years	Bachelor in special education
T10.C.D	Central	Less than 5 years	Bachelor in special education
T11.C.D	Central	5- less than 10 years	Diploma in special education

Most participants were visited in their schools and were interviewed face to face, usually during a break in the meeting room in their schools. However, two participant were interviewed by phone. Prior to recording the interviews, consent was provided

from each of the teachers participating, with full knowledge of the procedures and recording equipment being used. In this regard, the researcher tried to encourage all the interviewees to be supportive and ensured that they understand the research being undertaken, and clearly confirmed that they wanted to participate whilst knowing that the interview process would be relatively lengthy.

This was achieved by talking to them about the nature of the research and give them details about myself, including my professional background and academic credentials, to put them at ease and encourage honesty in their responses. This would help to create a friendly and relaxed environment for the participants that would encourage a sense of trust and would consequently ensure their answers would positively contribute to the research and enrich it. Prior to the interview, each teacher was encouraged to look over the interview outline, so that they were prepared for the questions to come. I asked each teacher for their permission to be recorded before recording the interview and all of them gave their explicit consent, as I assured them that the recording would not be passed on to any third party and would only be used for the research purposes. Each interview took approximately 30 to 40 minutes and was recorded on a high-quality digital recorder (Sony-ICD-PX240), with a secured password known only to myself. The responses gathered were first checked by listening to the recordings to ensure that it was clear and that there were no technical problems with the digital recorder. Although this was done immediately after each interview, rechecking was essential.

A uniform interview protocol was followed with all interviewees (see Appendix 5); however, during the interview, explanations were given to the respondents as required. During the interview, if a respondent's answer was particularly interesting, ambiguous or prompted further enquiry, supplementary questions were asked in order to gain

further information. Data was then downloaded into a computer, transcribed and sent to the participants for accuracy confirmation, in order to be ready for analysis at a later stage. The qualitative data treatment and analysis is presented in section 4.6.2.

In transcribing the interviews, teachers' names from different Districts were coded as following; (T1. N. D) (T2. N. D) indicates teachers from the North District, (T3. S. D) (T4. S. D) indicates teachers form the South District, (T5. E. D) (T6. E. D) indicates teachers from the East District, (T7. W. D) (T8. W. D) indicates teachers from the West District and (T9. C. D) (T10. C. D) (T11. C. D) indicates teachers from the Central District. This was done for anonymity and confidentiality of the despondences (Thomas, 2017).

4.7 Data Analysis

In this research, both quantitative and qualitative data were obtained, and each of these types of data was analysed separately using different analytical strategy. Quantitative data was statistically analysed, and qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis. Both are discussed further in the following two sections.

4.7.1 Quantitative Data (Questionnaires)

The quantitative data analysis started after receiving the completed surveys from the 331 participants in the research. The data were coded using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS for Windows, version 21.0). Each question was coded by number to be entered into the SPSS. Since this research is looking at obstacles to the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools, positive statements were coded as follows: strongly disagree (1) - disagree (2) - neither agree nor disagree (3) - agree (4) - strongly agree (5). Whereas negative statements were coded as: strongly agree (1) - agree (2) - neither agree nor disagree (3) - disagree (4) - strongly disagree (5).

Therefore, the length of agreement according to the five-point Likert scale used in this survey was calculated as shown in the table below.

Table 4.4
The Answers Standard Criteria of Respondent

Level of Agreement	Points	Length of Points
Strongly agree	1	From 1 to 1.81
Agree	2	From 1.82 to 2.60
Neither agree nor disagree	3	From 2.61 to 3.40
Disagree	4	From 3.41 to 4.20
Strongly disagree	5	From 4.21 to 5

The quantitative dataset was analysed using a number of statistical functions including descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics included: mean, frequency, percentage, and standard deviation. In terms of inferential statistics, a one-way analysis of variance ANOVA was used in this research to determine any statistically significant differences between the means scores of the five independent groups in the five different geographical districts involved in this research. Findings of the questionnaires are presented visually in tables and graphs with accompanying explanation in the chapter.

4.7.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

In analysing the qualitative data (in this case the interview transcripts), theoretical thematic analysis was undertaken, following the six guiding steps in conducting thematic analysis outlined by Braun and Clarke (2013), which will be discussed in more detail later in this section. According Bernard et al. (2016), one way from which themes can be generated is the inductive approach which is characterised by the utilisation of data and a data-centric focus. A prime example of this is grounded theory, primarily because identified thematic areas are intimately linked to specific points of data (Patton, 1990). The other way by which themes are determined is the prior theoretical understanding of the issue under research, usually referred to as an *a priori*, or deductive approach (Bernard et al., 2016, p. 53). *A priori* themes can also come from

already-agreed-on professional definitions found in literature reviews in terms of certain issues under investigation; from local, common sense constructs; and from researchers' values, theoretical orientations and personal experiences (Bulmer 1979; Maxwell 2012). In this research, an *a priori* approach was utilised in analysing the qualitative data and themes were generated from both initial analysis of the relevant literature using concepts that are well-established in the literature, as well as from a focus on the research questions (Braun and Clarke, 2013; Bernard et al., 2016).

Given the above, using *a priori* themes does not mean that unexpected and emergent themes were overlooked or not taken into consideration. These were, however, considered to be either established under new themes or were fit under-sub-themes if appropriate (Braun and Clarke, 2013). The four *a priori* themes in this research were: (a) inclusive culture of mainstream schools, (b) the provision of professional development for teachers, (c) the involvement of parents of students with SEN with school, and (d) the interactions of typically developing peers with students with SEN. The following section presents, in detail, the six steps followed in analysing the qualitative data for this research.

In analysing the qualitative data of a research using the deductive approach, Braun and Clarke (2013) suggested that, researchers start by getting familiar with the data obtained. In this regard, the responses of each interviewee were read and reread in order to ensure familiarity with all aspects of the data and to generate overall meanings from them (Cohen et al., 2017). In the first stage, I began taking notes, categorising and summarising the participant responses and marking ideas for coding using printed copies and a notebook. I highlighted responses with different colours in order to assign them to a code and grouped them by colours as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2013),

to form an initial outline. For example, red was used to identify responses aligned to the theme of inclusive culture of mainstream schools, green was used for responses to the theme of provision of professional development, blue was used for responses to the theme of parents' involvement and yellow was used for responses to the theme of peers' interactions. With these main themes ready, sub-themes were created according to codes determined from the participants' responses, which is the following second step of the analyses approach. This second stage was the generation of initial sub-themes, in which I began to compile a list of codes outlining the content of the data and anything interesting observed about them. Although initial themes were already determined, I was ready and open for other themes to emerge and I generated as many of the codes as possible. Many of these codes seemed to fit under the *a priori* themes. Even when participants discussed broader issues than those asked about, the topics were still fit with the four *a priori* themes.

In the third stage, I re-focused the analysis towards the broader level of themes, rather than codes. This was achieved by sorting the different codes into the *a priori* themes, and collating all the relevant coded data extracts to form sub-themes. Sub-themes were useful for giving structure to the larger and more complex themes, and helped in demonstrating the hierarchy of meaning within the data (Braun and Clarke, 2013). It was helpful in this phase to use a table to organize the themes, codes and sub-themes visually for further analysis. In fact, displaying the data visually in tables, charts, networks or other graphical formats is essential and helpful in drawing conclusions from the mass of data (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Table 4.5 shows the *a priori* themes, codes and the sub-themes obtained from the qualitative data set of the research.

Table 4.5
a priori Themes, Codes and Sub-Themes Obtained from Qualitative Data.

a priori theme	Sub-theme	Codes
Inclusive Culture of Mainstream School	School's overall understanding of, and attitudes towards the inclusion and students with SEN.	Locational inclusion- separation in all aspects of school life- viewed as additional workload- responsibility of special education teachers only.
	School leadership.	Different level of supportive leadership - insufficient knowledge and training.
	Teachers' collaboration and relationships.	Non-collaborative relationship- lack of knowledge about teaching and dealing with students with SEN - insufficient training- fare of unknown- unwilling to take responsibility- pay gap between teachers.
	Inclusive activities.	Activities for students with SEN are done by special education teachers only - schools' activities do not account for the divers needs of students.
	Language used within the school.	Discriminatory language use - labelling students based on disability.
	Physical environment and resources.	Lack of prepared physical environment in schools - old school buildings - small classrooms - inaccessible entrances - lack of playgrounds - different level of availability of resources - teachers buy materials from their own expenses.
The Provision of Professional Development for Staff	Training and qualifications	Lack of in-service training, miss-match between pre-service training and real practice for special education teachers - lack of collaboration between professionals- lack of learning communities.
	Specialist Human Support	Insufficient supervision visits and support - lack of residential special education supervisors- lack of special services providers in schools (speech therapist, physiotherapist)
The Involvement and Collaboration of Parents of Students with SEN with the School.	Parents involvement	Positive attitudes- negative attitudes- lack of collaboration.

	Factors affecting the level of parents' involvement.	Educational level - low expectation about child's potential to learn- and low expectation of parents about being able to enhance their children's learning- minimum level of efforts made by school to encourage parents' involvement- no parents voice in IEPs.
Typically Developing Peers' Interactions with Students with SEN	Interactions between typically developing peers and students with SEN	Friendships and positive interactions- positive and negative behavioural issues- positive impact of inclusion on both set of students
	Factors influencing peers' interactions.	Family factors- previous experience with individual with SEN- time factor- encouraging activities.

The fourth stage involved reviewing the themes. During this phase, I made sure that the data within the themes was coherent and that the coded data extracts fitted into the themes. This was achieved by reading and re-reading the entirety of the data to ascertaining whether the themes worked in relation to the data set, as well as to code any additional data that had been missed in earlier coding stages (Braun and Clarke, 2013).

The fifth and final stage of thematic analysis is defining and naming themes. At this point, themes of the interview were previously determined through the reviewing of the literature and were confirmed through the interview pilot stage. This, therefore, helped in making it clear as to what each theme was about and what aspect of the data each theme captured, as well as how it related to the overall story of the research (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Once these steps were performed, producing the final report was the sixth step, in which the analytic narrative and data extracts are coherently written after a triangulation with the survey data was carried out; this facilitated discussion to compare and corroborate the quantitative and qualitative findings which will be presented in Chapter seven.

4.7.3 Qualitative Data Trustworthiness

For the purpose of guaranteeing that the qualitative data collection processes are trustworthy, the researcher has examined the findings from the present research, along with a range of shared concerns detected by Lincoln and Guba (1985), including dependability, confirmability, transferability and credibility.

4.7.3.1 Credibility

Since ensuring credibility necessitates that a researcher guarantees the believability of the collected results, information richness is more important than information quantity in this context. The degree to which findings are accurate can be determined by employing several approaches such as respondent cross-checking. However, the fact should not be overlooked is that, credibility can only be objectively evaluated by respondents and outsiders to the research. Consequently, the researcher presented completed interview transcripts to respondents afterwards and asked them for confirmation that the transcripts correctly reflect their opinions in a process referred to as 'member checking' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985 p. 314). Transcripts in this research were confirmed by the interviewees

To further elevate the credibility of the results, the researcher consulted several colleagues to comment on the analytical approaches taken, for example, the coding and the thematic analysis. Following this, the analysis itself was presented to the researcher's academic supervisors for feedback. This is useful, mainly because it affords the researcher with various interpretational perspectives, thereby safeguarding against subjective bias (Patton,1990). Such safeguarding is critical in qualitative research because analysis is mostly dependent on the subjective features of the researcher (Bryman, 2015). As such, the researcher sought to exercise objectivity whilst

removing perspectival and perception-based considerations from the interpretive process.

4.7.3.2 Transferability

According to Shenton (2004), another one of the four pillars of research trustworthiness is transferability (also referred to as external validity in quantitative studies). When a research is valid, this means that its results are generalisable and transferable to different scenarios, a process which is delineated by those who read the research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Bryman (2015), argued that both the researcher and the readers are pivotal players in the process of determining how certain findings can be transferred into other scenarios. In addition, as detailed by Merriam (2001), external validity is underpinned by the researcher's comprehensive provision of data, primarily because the degree to which the transferability of findings can be determined relies on the availability of situational and contextual information. In this research, I incorporated into the research comprehensive accounts of the data collection process, the research respondents, and the contextual aspects of the research. However, as this research used interview as part of a mixed methods, the qualitative method (interview) does not aim for generalisation but rather to provide perspectives very specific to a particular context that is contextually bound and unique (Cohen et al., 2017).

4.7.3.3 Dependability

Dependability, another one of the four pillars of trustworthiness in qualitative research, is the counterpart of the term reliability, commonly found in quantitative research (Bryman, 2015). In this context, the degree to which a research is dependable is determined by the consistency with which its findings could be reproduced through a second iteration of the research. Therefore, determining dependability requires a close

understanding of the research methodology (Hammersley, 2007). The researcher addressed this issue by keeping a thorough log of the data collection process, thereby enabling future researchers to check through the interview transcripts in both languages (English and Arabic), determining the extent to which an appropriate methodology was employed (Bryman, 2015).

As previously mentioned, since the research involved gathering information from respondents in the Arabic language, a critical concern associated with dependability arose from translational considerations. Specifically, the Arabic-English translation process had to ensure that nothing was lost or added into the collected responses, and, moreover, that semantic content across the two languages was identical. Given the importance of this issue, professional translators were used to evaluate the validity of the translation. All translators are qualified in linguistics and hold degrees from UK-based universities. The translations produced were cross-referenced against each other, and although some variability arose, consensus was finally established. One Arabic transcript was then translated into English, as required for the overall interpretation of the research results (see Appendix 5).

4.7.3.4 Conformability

According to Cohen et al. (2017), conformability is defined as the degree to which the findings of any given research project can be supported by the data collected. Triangulation is a technique used by researchers to bolster the credibility of findings thereby promoting conformability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). As described by Yin (2009), data triangulation is useful when attempting to guarantee the accuracy of findings, especially when offering different accounts for assessing a certain issue by a variety of research methods and data sources. In view of these considerations, data

triangulation was applied in this research by conducting both interviews and questionnaires, and then pairing this with an examination of the existed literature (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This is presented in chapter seven, the discussion chapter.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

In order to conduct an ethical research, there are a number of ethical considerations that the researcher should address where appropriate to their research. Thus, factors such as ensuring confidentiality, anonymity, access to participants and secure storage of data had to be considered and addressed when undertaking the research (Thomas, 2017). One of the main ethical issues to be considered is acceptance and access. In this regard, a number of documents needed to be obtained prior to conducting any piece of research. These include a letter from the researcher's research supervisor (see Appendix 2), as well as the final draft of the research instrument (see Appendix 4and 5) to be sent to the Ministry of Education in order to receive permission to conduct the research with the intended teachers at the intended schools called Research Facilitation Letter (see Appendix 3). All documents required were sent to the Ministry of Education and permission was granted. Another consideration, in accordance with the British Education Research Association (BERA), is participant privacy as well as the sensitivity of the questions which are being asked (BERA, 2011). In this regard, none of the instruments asked questions regarding personally sensitive or private information. Anonymity and confidentiality are also particularly important. This is because teachers would disincline to discuss their personal details or opinions in a piece of research if it could not guarantee anonymity and confidentiality.

In addition, each participant was made aware of their absolute right to withdraw for any reason via a covering letter attached to each instrument, as well as being informed

verbally. The letter also stated that the participants' anonymity would be protected, as no questions would require personal information to be given (see Appendix 4 and 5). A brief outline was also given regarding the aims and nature of the research and informed consent obtained; this is of heightened importance in case if the participant is being video or voice recorded (BERA, 2011; Thomas, 2017). Openness and disclosure are also important ethical aspects to be considered and researchers must therefore avoid deception or subterfuge (BERA, 2011). In this research, voice recordings were made following confirmation that the interviewees consented to be recorded; all interviewees agreed to be recorded during their interviews. Prior to recording the interviews, consent was obtained from each of the participating teachers, with the full knowledge of the procedures and recording equipment being used. In this regard, the researcher tried to encourage all the interviewees to be supportive and ensured that they understood the aims of the research being undertaken, and clearly confirmed that they wanted to participate whilst knowing that the interview process would be relatively lengthy. All interviewees in relatively close areas from where I was located were interviewed face to face. However, interviewees in more distant schools were contacted by phone first as to be asked if they would like to be interviewed face to face or by phone. Two interviewees were happy to be interviewed by phone, but one interviewee preferred face to face interview instead of a phone interview. In this case, even though it would have been more convenient for the researcher to do the interview by phone, as the interviewee was located in a school that required more than two hours travel, I had to respect the interviewee's preference and travel to her school to conduct the interview.

Prior to conducting investigations in KSA, it is imperative that researchers have explicit permission from the Ministry of Education. Therefore, I followed the procedures for obtaining a permission letter from the relevant government department (see section

4.7), which I was then able to present to the participants. One possible outcome of this approach was that some individuals might have considered the researcher to be an official evaluator from the Ministry of Education, potentially making them reluctant to express their views freely and honestly. For this reason, I explicitly clarified this point during the initial introduction, during which I provided information on myself, my position, and the aims and objectives of the research. This information was also supplied in written form, through an information sheet attached to each copy of the research instruments.

In addition, in order to conform to the ethical standard that research participants should not be exposed to any risk of harm consequences (BERA, 2004), authorisation for the data collection procedures was obtained from the Ministry of Education prior to recruiting teachers or head teachers. Hence, adequate measures were taken to safeguard every participant's employment status; their right to free expression; their anonymity; and finally, their data confidentiality. In the same line of the ethical consideration, the location in which the interview takes place should be convenient (and comfortable) for the participant, private, quiet and allows for an uninterrupted experience (Byrne, 2001). In this regards, one of the interviewees asked to change the meeting room in which I was about to interview her. This was because it was next to the head teacher’s office and therefore she was not comfortable to be in that room for the interview. Therefore, we have arranged another room that was convenient and comfortable for the teacher.

During any research, a debrief is recommended in order to answer any queries, address concerns, supply a copy of the findings and explain the future of the research (BERA, 2011). The participants, therefore, were asked to write their email address on the information sheet if they wished to know about the research results, so that the researcher could send them a copy. Finally, the research complied with the Data

Protection Act 1998 by the completing of University of Birmingham's ethics application and obtaining ethical approval (see Appendix 1).

4.9 Positionality of the Researcher

Although my positionality was mentioned explicitly in different chapters throughout this thesis, this section focuses further on clarifying and providing information regarding my position in this research. I was constantly aware of my positionality: A Saudi female a special education teacher. Since I share some of the characteristics with the participants such as the role, experience, nationality, gender as well as being familiar with the KSA's educational system, it is possible that certain participants viewed me as an insider (Arthur, 2010). In this case, participants might have thought that the researcher was requesting obvious information that the research already knew. For example when they use statements like 'as you know'. To overcome this situation, a variety of strategies were employed to ensure the openness of the participants' responses, including the use of follow-up questions, for example, 'How is that?' 'Can you explain more?' and 'what do you mean?' These strategies were used to ensure that honest and comprehensive data were gathered from the participants (Thomson and Gunter, 2010).

On the other hand, since the General Secretary for Educational Research in the Ministry of Education provided assistance in distributing the research instrument, some participants might have considered the researcher to be an outsider as official evaluator from the Ministry of Education, potentially making them reluctant to express their views freely and honestly (Arthur, 2010; Thomson and Gunter, 2010). For this reason, I explicitly clarified this point during the initial introduction, during which I provided information on myself, my position, and the aims and objectives of the research. This

information was also supplied in written form, through an information sheet attached to each copy of the research instruments.

Another factor related to my positionality was my experience of studying in a different district of KSA. This allowed me to make friends and meet colleagues from other parts of the country and to gain a better understanding of the differences between inclusive education practices in these contexts. This encouraged me to consider the geographical location variable in this research, in an attempt to find out whether differences exist between districts in addition to the possible reason for these differences. This is especially important given that the Ministry of Education issues uniform official polices governing inclusive education throughout KSA, but the actual implementation of these policies is managed by the different LEAs in each district.

My professional experience was also helpful to me in a number of ways. Having studied and trained in Riyadh (Central District) and having been employed as a teacher in Abha (Southern District), I was well positioned to understand and interpret the emergent data in this research. These personal insights were particularly valuable in interpreting the differences between districts (see section 7.3). My experience also gave me numerous connections, colleagues and friends in the different districts of KSA, who proved invaluable when navigating my way to schools in their districts. Even though they were not in the schools that were randomly selected, they helped me to find my way around, as obviously not being from the same district it is hard to know where the selected schools are.

In conducting the research process, although the General Secretary for Educational Research in the Ministry of Education provided assistance in distributing the research instrument, I subsequently contacted each of the schools to confirm receipt of the

questionnaires and address any related questions. Where possible, I did this in person, with the remainder of contact being limited to telephone calls. However, it can be difficult for a female researcher to travel alone in KSA, especially in rural and remote areas, most of which required about two hours travel by plane, whereas the others required several hours of travel by car. My husband provided valuable assistance by taking a leave of absence from his work to travel with me to conduct the research.

4.10 Summary of Chapter

This chapter presented the fieldwork design and the methodological approach adopted for this research. The chapter started by presenting the research aims and questions. This was followed by a rationale for adopting the mixed method approach, which provides different types of important data on the topic of interest (Creswell, 2014; Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). Then the research design and the rationale behind it were also discussed. In order to address the research questions and achieve the research aims, the research was undertaken through the use of mixed methods, utilising questionnaires and interviews as the data collection tools. This was followed by a discussion of the procedures of the sampling techniques and the collection of the data. The important issues of piloting, sampling, the ethical considerations and access were also discussed. Finally, the quality and trustworthiness of the research were examined. Whilst every measure has been taken to select and apply the most appropriate methodology and methods for this particular research, every method has its limitations, and so there will also be limitations to this piece of research. These will be discussed in Chapter Eight (conclusion chapter).

CHAPTER FIVE: QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This research used both quantitative questionnaires and qualitative interviews to determine obstacles to inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools by focusing on the following four aspects: (a) inclusive culture of mainstream schools, (b) the provision of professional development for schools' staff, (c) the involvement and collaboration of parents of students with school and (d) typically developing peers' interaction with students with SEN in school. The results of the quantitative data analysis are outlined in this chapter, as they provide a broad picture of the teachers' responses to questions about obstacles to inclusion. The results of the interviews followed in chapter six as they provided more in-depth data about the obstacles to inclusion of students with SEN.

This chapter began by presenting part one of the questionnaire which involves the demographic information of the participants in this research. It will then move on to the second part of the questionnaire, which includes a number of statements about obstacles to the inclusion grouped under the four previously mentioned aspects and the responses of teachers to each one of them. This will be visually demonstrated in the form of tables and graphs, with accompanying explanations. The Statistical SPSS software was used to analyse the data. Frequencies, percentages and means were calculated to describe the personal and occupational characteristics of the research participants and to describe responses to the main themes included in the questionnaire. As one of the research questions is to compare the difference in the responses between the five districts, one-way ANOVA test was used to calculate the significance of any relationships and this will be presented later in this chapter.

5.2 Part One of the Questionnaire: Demographic Information of Research's Sample

The teachers who participated in this research were n = 331 special education teachers in mainstream girls schools that are running inclusion of students with SEN. The demographic and background variables of the participants were described using descriptive statistical procedures, as presented in the following sections. The first section presents the geographical districts from which the participants are, the second section presents the special education qualification of the participants, and the third section presents the length of year of experience of the participants.

2.5.1 Geographical Districts

This section presents the geographical areas from which special education teachers participated and the number of teachers completed the research's survey from each district, as presented in the table below.

Table 5.1
Districts and number of teachers from each district

District	Number of completed questionnaires	Percentage
North	51	15.4%
South	74	22.4%
Central	47	14.2%
East	74	22.4%
West	85	25.7%
Total	331	100%

* n = 331

From Table 5.1 it can be seen that 51 (15.4%) teachers participated from the North District, whereas 74 (22.4%) teachers participated from the South Region, the same number from the East District, with 47 (14.2%) teachers from the Central District and the largest number 85 (25.7%), from the West District.

2.5.2 Qualifications of the Participants

This section summarises the teachers' special education qualifications, as presented in the tables below. The first table 5.2, illustrates the special education qualifications of the participants as whole. Whereas the second table 5.3, presents the special education qualification of the participants by the individual districts.

Table 5.2

*Distribution of teachers by special needs qualifications**

Special education qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Diploma (two years in special education)	78	32.5%
Bachelor in special education	232	70 %
Master in special education	20	6 %

* *n* = 331

Table 5.3

Distribution of teachers by special needs qualifications by districts

Districts	Diploma in special education		Bachelor in special education		Masters in special education	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
North	11	21.5 %	39	76.4 %	1	1.9 %
South	33	44.5 %	39	52.7 %	2	2.7 %
Central	4	8.5 %	42	89.3 %	1	2.1 %
East	24	32.4 %	48	64.8 %	2	2.7 %
West	7	8.2 %	64	75.2 %	14	16.4 %

* *n* = 331

In terms of the special education qualifications, it can be seen from Table 5.2 above that the majority of teachers in this research have a Bachelor in special education, 232 (70 %). Whilst 78 teachers (32.5 %) with a Diploma degree in special education and 20 teachers (6%) with a Master's degree in special education. Table 5.3, however, presents the special education qualifications by the individual district. For example, the highest percentage in all of the districts was still for those who have a Bachelor degree in special education. Whereas the lowest percentage is for those holding a Master's degree in special education. For example, in the West District, 64 out of 85 teachers hold Bachelor in special education, whereas the highest percentage of those who hold postgraduate degree in special education was in the West District which was 14 teachers. Finally, the South District has the highest percentage of teachers who hold Diploma in special education which was 33 teachers.

2.5.3 Years of Experience

This section presents the special education teachers' length of experience in working with students with SEN, as presented in the tables below. The section also includes two tables, table 5.4, illustrates the length of years of experience of the participants as whole. Whereas table 5.5, presents length of years of experience of the participants by the individual districts.

Table 5.4

Distribution of teachers by years of experience in teaching students with SEN

Years of experience	Frequency	Percentage
< 5 years	184	55.6 %
5 – 10 years	64	19.3 %
10 – 15 years	46	13.9 %
> 15 years	37	11.2 %

* n = 331

Table 5.5

Number of years of experience in teaching students with SEN by districts

Districts	< 5 years		5 – 10 years		10 – 15 years		> 15 years	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
North	38	74.5 %	5	9.8 %	2	3.9-%	6	11.8 %
South	40	54.1 %	18	24.3 %	14	18.9 %	2	2.7 %
Central	39	83.0 %	5	10.6 %	1	2.1 %	2	4.3 %
East	49	66.2 %	19	25.7 %	5	6.8 %	1	1.4 %
West	18	21.2 %	17	20.0 %	24	28.2 %	26	30.6 %

* n = 331

As shown in table 5.4, there were 184 teachers (55.6 %) who had experience of less than 5 years, 64 teachers (19.3%) who had experience of between 5-10 years, 46 teachers (13.9 %) with experience between 10-15 years, and 37 teachers (11.2 %) with experience of 15 years or more years. Table 5.5, however, presents the number of years of experience in teaching students with SEN by the individual district. For example, the highest percentage in the North (74.5 %), South (54.1 %), Central (83.0 %), and in the East (66.2 %) was for those who had less than five years of experience. Whereas in the West, (30.5 %) was reported for teachers reported having 15 or more years of experience.

5.3 Part Two of the Questionnaire (Obstacles to Inclusion)

In this part of the questionnaire, participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each of the questionnaire statements in each of the research aspects. This will be presented visually using graphs to illustrate the participants' responses with a combining brief explanation of them.

5.3.1 Inclusive Culture of Mainstream School

The objective of this aspect is to identify obstacles facing the inclusion of students with SEN in primary mainstream girls schools in regard to the aspect of the inclusive culture mainstream schools. Figure 5.1 summarises the total responses of the sample to this aspect, using six phrases of the research questionnaire.

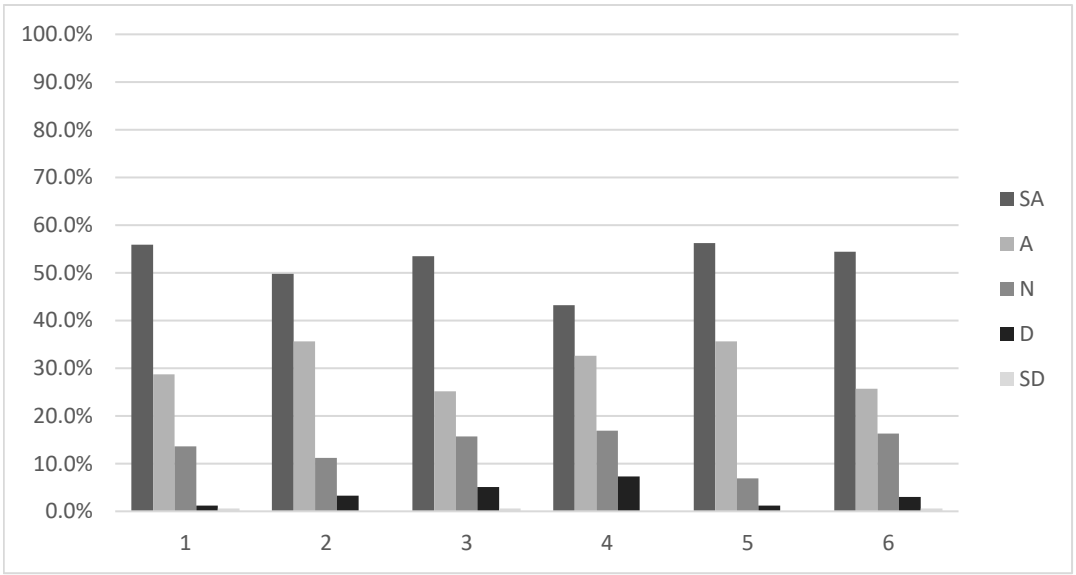

Figure 5.1 The overall teacher's responses to the survey statements for the aspect of inclusive culture of school. 1 = There is a lack of understanding of the concept of inclusion amongst school staff, (*M* = 1.62, *SD* = .81); 2 = There is an absence of shared understanding that inclusion is about increasing participation of student with SEN in, as well as access to, the school, (*M* = 1.68, *SD* = .80); 3 = There is a lack of collaboration between general and special education teachers in teaching students with SEN, (*M* = 1.74, *SD* = .94); 4 = Students with SEN are seen by school staff as individual with lower level of abilities and skills, (*M* = 1.88. *SD* = .94); 5 = Staff avoid labelling students according to notions of ability, (*M* = 1.53, *SD* = .68); 6 = School head teacher do not feel responsible for making the school inclusive, (*M* = 1.70, *SD* = .89). The overall mean of this aspect is (*M* = 1.69, *SD* = .53)
SA = Strongly agree; A = Agree; N = Neither agree nor disagree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly disagree.

From Figure 5.1 above, it can be clearly inferred that labelling children based on the notion of ability reported the lowest mean score amongst the other statements of this

part of the questionnaire, which is *M* = 1.53 (*SD* = .68). This demonstrates a strong agreement according to the standard criteria for the answers used in this research (section 4.6.1). In addition, over half (55.9 %) of the special education teachers participating in this research believe there is a lack of understanding of the concept of inclusion amongst staff in their schools. This might be confirmed by the high degree of agreement between teachers with the following statement which states that 'there is an absence of shared understanding that inclusion is about increasing participation of student with SEN in, as well as access to, the school', with mean score of *M* = 1.68 (*SD* = .80), indicating agreement based on the answers' standard criteria used in this research. Similarly, there an absence of sharing the responsibility between teachers to promote inclusion in school on the part of the head teachers, which is an issue addressed on the discussion chapter.

The need for collaboration between teachers is supported by the result reported in statement 3, as the majority of the teachers either strongly agreed 53.5% or agree 25.1% that there is a lack of collaboration between teachers in teaching students with SEN, with mean score of *M* = 1.74 (*SD* = .94), indicating an agreement regarding this being an obstacle to the inclusion of students with SEN. The data also shows that just under half of all teachers (43.2 %) strongly agree that in their schools, students with SEN are seen by school staff as individuals with lower level of abilities and skills. From the data presented above, the teachers generally agree with these statements as being obstacles to inclusion as the overall mean score of this aspect is *M* = 1.69 (*SD* = .53).

5.3.2 The Provision of Professional Development for Staff

The objective of this aspect of the questionnaire is to identify obstacles to inclusion of students with SEN in primary mainstream girls in terms of the aspect of opportunities for professional development for schools' staff. Figure 5.2 demonstrates the total responses of the sample, using six statements as part of the questionnaire.

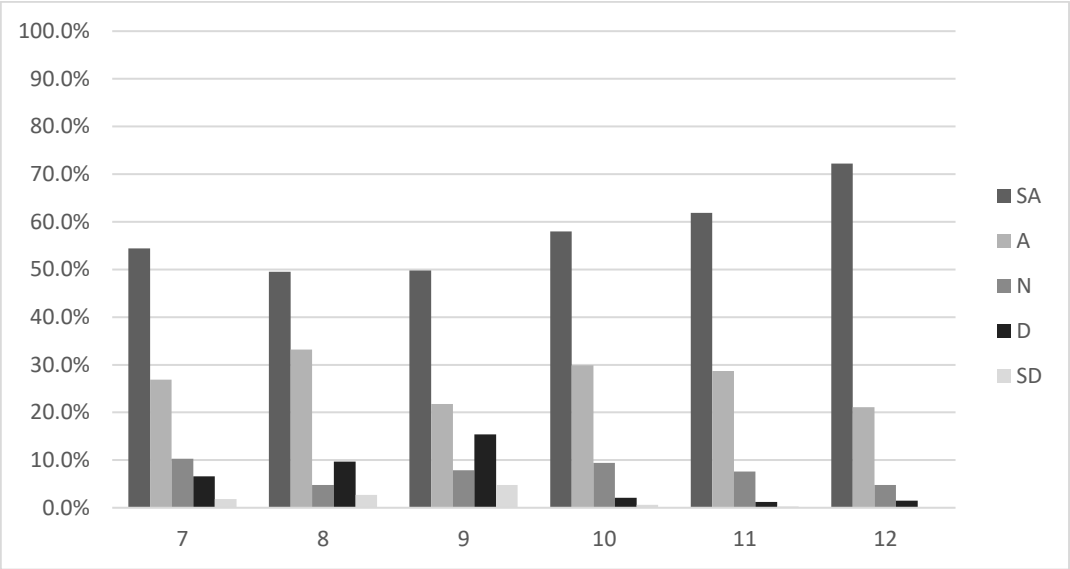

Figure 5.2 The overall teacher's responses to the survey statements for the aspect of professional development. 7 = There is a lack of training that help teachers to acquire new and different ways of teaching students with SEN, (M = 1.75, SD = 1.01); 8 = School's staff are not trained enough to teach with students with SEN which hinders the effectiveness of inclusion, (*M* = 1.83, *SD* = 1.07); 9 = Teachers receive training in devising and managing collaborative learning activities, (*M* = 2.03, SD = 1.29); 10 = There are regular inspection visits by special education supervisors from Local Educational Authority and/or Ministry of Education to monitor the inclusive practices in the school, (*M* = 1.57, *SD* = .80); 11 = There is a limited specialist support from Local Educational Authority to promote inclusion of students with SEN in the school, (*M* = 1.49, *SD* = .72); 12 = The school lacks a multi-disciplinary team, including psychologists and physiotherapist, speech and language therapists, (*M* = 1.35, *SD* = .65). The overall mean of this aspect is (*M* = 1.67, *SD* = .554)
SA = Strongly agree; A = Agree; N = Neither agree nor disagree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly disagree.

Figure 5.2 above illustrates that the highest percentage of agreement of the teachers, which is more than two third (72.2 %) strongly agree that, the school lacks a multi-disciplinary team, including psychologists and physiotherapist, speech and language therapists' with a mean value of *M* = 1.35 (*SD* = .65), which indicates a strong agreement with this statement as being an obstacle, according to the answers' standard used in this research. In addition, more than half of the teachers (61.9 %) agreed that there is insufficient specialist support from LEA to promote inclusion of students with SEN in their school, which is one of the obstacles that hinder inclusion of students with SEN

in their schools, an issue that will be elucidated further in the discussion chapter. The overall mean value of the statement that 'there are regular inspection visits by specialist supervisors from Local Educational Authority or/and Ministry of Education to monitor the effectiveness of inclusive practices in the school' indicated a strong agreement (*M* = 1.57, *SD = .80)*, based on the research standard. According to over half of the participants of the research, there is a need for training programs that help teachers to acquire new and different ways of teaching students with SEN needs. A similar split in the teachers' opinions was observed in the case of the both statements number 9 of the research questionnaire considering that just under half of the participants, 49.8 %, answered strongly agree. The overall answers initially indicate that these statements are seen as obstacles to inclusion, in the aspect related to the provision of the professional development for school staff, as the overall mean value of the aspect *M* = 1.67 (*SD* = .554) indicates a strong agreement, according to the answers' standard criteria used in this research.

5.3.3 The Involvement and Collaboration of Parents of Students with SEN with the School

The aim of this section of the questionnaire is to identify obstacles to inclusion of students SEN in primary mainstream girls schools in regard to the aspect of the involvement and collaboration of parents of students with SEN with the school. Figure 5.3 below shows the total responses of the teachers, using six statements as part of the research questionnaire.

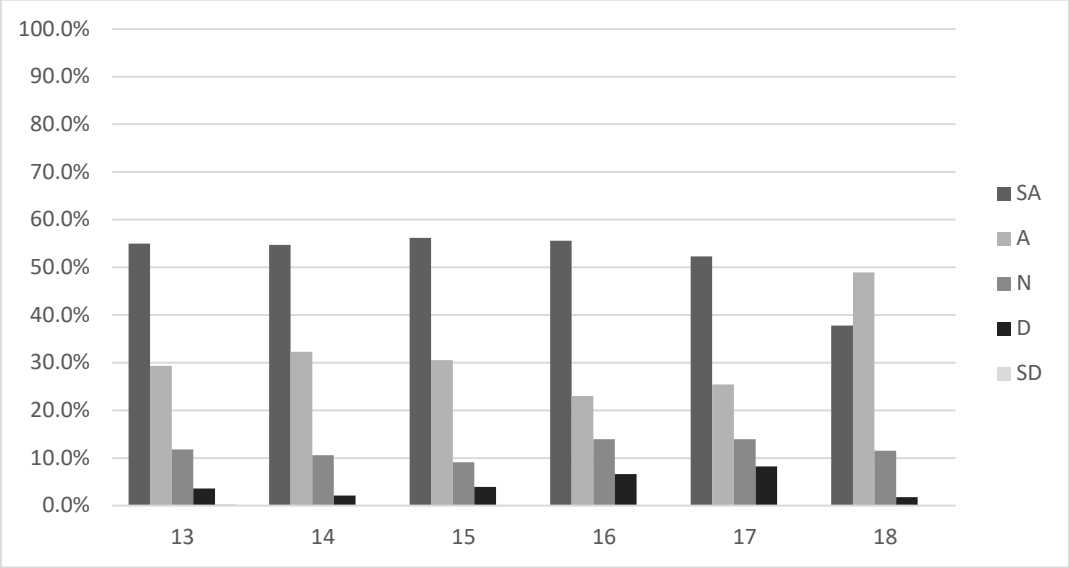

Figure 5.3 The overall teacher's responses to the survey statements for the aspect of parent's involvement with school. 13 = Parents of students with SEN appear to accept including their children in mainstream schools and are happy with it, (*M* = 1.65, *SD* = .85); 14 = Parents of students with SEN do not consider the teachers' daily reports about their children such as homework notebook, (*M* = 1.60, *SD* = .76); 15 = Parents of students with SEN are not collaborating enough with teachers, (*M* = 1.61, *SD* = .81); 16 = Parents of students with SEN are not keen on asking teachers about what they can do to support their children's learning at home, (*M* = 1.71, *SD* = .94); 17 = There are a variety of occasions in which parents of students with SEN can participate and discuss the progress of and concerns about their children., (*M* = 1.78, *SD* = .97); 18 = Staff encourage the involvement of parents in their children's learning, (*M* = 1.77, *SD* = .72). The overall mean of this aspect is (*M* = 1.69, *SD* = .52)
SA = Strongly agree; A = Agree; N = Neither agree nor disagree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly disagree.

In terms of parents' involvement and collaboration with school, it appears that whilst more than half of the teachers (55 %) believe that, 'parents of students with SEN appear to accept including their children in mainstream schools and are happy with it', the data, however, shows that the majority of teachers reported insufficient level of collaboration and involvement of parents with school, where 56 % of them strongly agree and 30 % agree that, 'parents of students with SEN are not collaborating enough with teachers'. Additionally, over half of the teachers (54 %) further agreed that parents do not consider the daily reports that they produce about the children, such as homework notebook. For the remaining three statements of this part of the questionnaire 16, 17 and 18 the overall means are M = 1.71 (*SD* = .94), *M* = 1.78 (*SD* = .97) and *M* = 1.77 (*SD* = .72) respectively, which all fall in the range of agreement based on the answers' standard criteria of the research. In general, from the total mean score of this aspect, which is *M* = 1.69 (*SD* = .52), the aspect of parents' involvement

with school indicates strong agreement with it as being an obstacle, according to the study standard. Discussion of these findings will be presented in Chapter Seven.

5.3.4 Typically Developing Peers' Interaction with Students with SEN

This section aims to identify obstacles to inclusion of students with SEN in primary mainstream girls schools in regard to the aspect of typically developing peers' interactions with students with SEN. The total responses of the sample to this aspect are presented in the following Figure 5.4.

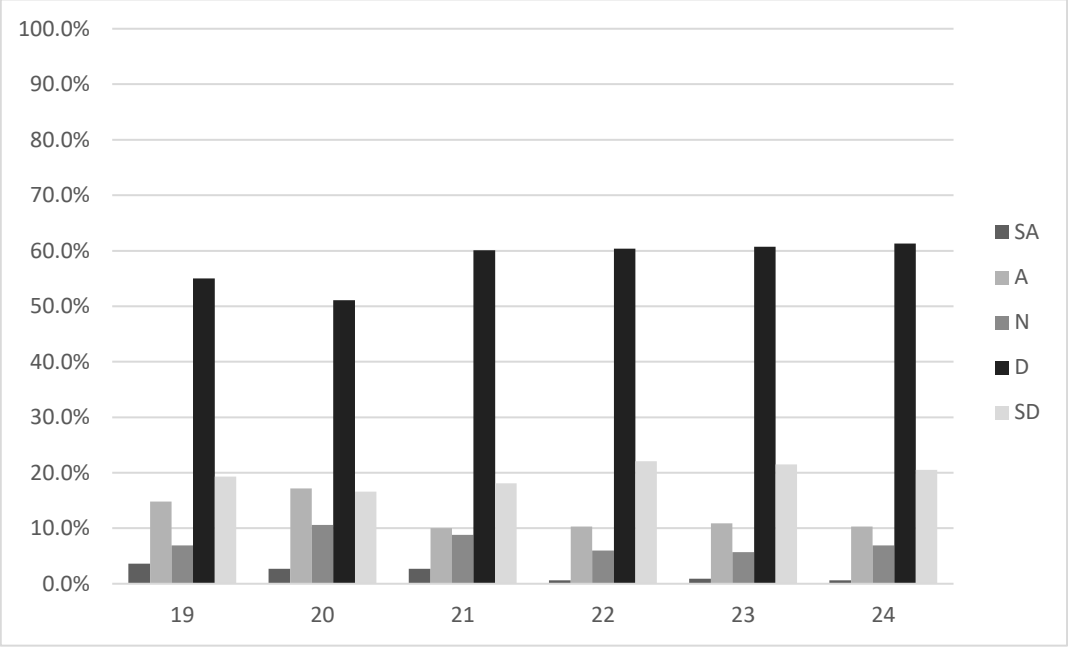

Figure 5.4 The overall teacher's responses to the survey statements for the aspect of typically developing peer's interactions with students with SEN. 19 = Typically developing students do not appear to accept students with SEN in the school, (M = 3.59, SD =1.09); 20 = Typically developing students bully their peers with SEN (by using discriminatory name calling that reflects disability), (M = 3.72, SD = 1.05); 21 = Opportunities in which both typically developing students and their peers with SEN can interact with each other are limited, (M = 3.81, SD = .94); 22 = Typically developing students do not prefer to share their knowledge and skills with their peers with SEN, (M = 3.94, SD = .87); 23 = Typically developing students do not prefer to set next to students with SEN, (*M* = 3.91, *SD* = .89); 24 = Typically developing students do not prefer to play with students with SEN, (*M* = 3.91, *SD* = .86). The overall mean of this aspect is (*M* = 3.81, *SD* = .94)
SA = Strongly agree; A = Agree; N = Neither agree nor disagree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly disagree.

As opposed to the three previous aspects, mostly positive views were found in this aspect. Firstly, all the statements of this aspect reported high means value which are all more than *M* = 3.59 (*SD* = 1.09). For example, using discriminatory name calling based on the students' need seem to be an uncommon phenomenon between students, as

perceived by teachers, where the majority of teachers disagree with that typically developing students bully their peers with SEN by using discriminatory name calling that reflects disability. Similarly, over half (60 %) of teachers disagree that typically developing students do not appear to accept students with SEN in the school. From the teachers' responses, the relationship between both typically developing students and students with SEN seems positive, where according to the teachers' responses to statements 21, 22, 23 of the research questionnaire, typically developing students sit next to, play, as well as share knowledge with their peers with SEN. Finally, the overall mean value calculated for this aspect is M = 3.81 (SD = .94), which indicates disagreement with this aspect being an obstacle to inclusion, as perceived by teachers and according to the standard used in this research. Having presented the total responses of the research sample to the questionnaire items, the following section will highlight the statistical differences found in teachers' responses based on their geographical location.

5.4 Differences in Responses between Districts

One-way ANOVA test was used to determine the statistical differences between districts. Tables of differences will be presented first and will be commented on later in this section. From the ANOVA test, significant differences at the p<.001 level were found in the aspect of the inclusive culture of mainstream schools [F(df=4,326) = 8.215, p<.001] and the aspect of professional development [F(df=4,326) = 7.03, p<001], as shown in the tables 5.6 and 5.7 below.

Table 5.6
One-way ANOVA in mean attitude scores between the districts

	Mean by location					ANOVA test	
Aspect	North	South	East	West	Central	F	p-value
Inclusive culture of mainstream schools	1.74	1.84	1.70	1.81	1.43	8.215	<.001***
Professional development	1.84	1.81	1.70	1.68	1.43	7.030	<.001***
Parents involvement with school	1.69	1.60	1.85	1.67	1.68	1.63	.164
Typically developing peers' interactions with students with SEN	3.84	3.72	3.71	3.88	3.87	1.401	.233

** highly significant ***very highly significant

Table 5.7

Multiple comparisons in mean scores of two aspects between each district with the central district

	p-value	
District	Inclusive culture of school	Professional development
North		
South	.238	.797
East	.695	.184
West	.443	.094
Central	.001**	<.001***
South		
North	.238	.797
East	.115	.234
West	.647	.116
Central	<.001***	<.001***
East		
North	.695	.184
South	.115	.234
West	.241	.844
Central	.005**	.006**
West		
North	.443	.094
South	.647	.116
East	.241	.844
Central	<.001***	.004**

**highly significant ***very highly significant

The results of a one-way ANOVA summarised in Table 5.6 show that there was a significant difference at the p <.001 level in teachers' responses in the aspect of the inclusive culture of mainstream schools between the five districts [F (df= 4,326) = 8.215, p<.001], although the mean scores for the five districts indicates that there are obstacles to the inclusive culture of the mainstream school. Using pairwise comparisons, given in Table 5.7, there is a difference between Central District and all the other districts. This result indicates that teachers from the Central District show higher levels of agreement to the aspect of the inclusive culture of mainstream school as being an obstacle to the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools, compared to the other districts.

In addition, the results of one-way ANOVA show that there was a significant difference at the p<.001 level in the teachers' responses on the aspect of professional development between the five districts [F (df= 4,326) = 7.03, p<001]. From the table 5.7, the mean scores for four districts (East, West, North and South) indicate predominantly neutrality towards obstacles in the teachers' professional development, except for the Central

District. Using pairwise comparison, shown in Table 5.7, there is significant differences between the Central and all the other districts. This result indicates that the teachers from the Central District show higher agreement to the aspect of professional development as being an obstacle to the inclusion, compared to the other districts.

5.5 Summary of Chapter

In this chapter, a range of statistical analyses were used to analyse the data gathered from the questionnaires. The quantitative findings were presented in this chapter visually in the form of tables and were followed by initial explanations and interpretations. The chapter began with demographic information of the research sample, being the first section in the questionnaires. It then presented the second section of the questionnaire which focuses on obstacles facing the implementation of inclusion of students with SEN in primary mainstream girls schools in KSA. This part addresses the key points of the research in terms of the inclusive culture of mainstream schools, the provision of professional development for schools' staff, the involvement and collaboration of parents of students with SEN with schools, and typically developing peers' interaction with students with SEN, all from the perspectives of special education teachers. The findings showed obstacles to inclusion of students with SEN in all of the aspects except the aspect of typically developing peers' interaction with students with SEN in which all of the teachers' responses were positive using mean and standard deviation statistics. This was followed by highlighting the findings of one-way ANOVA tests, which calculated the statistical differences found in teachers' responses based on their geographical location. From the ANOVA test, significant differences were found in the aspects of inclusive culture of mainstream school and the aspect of provision of professional development for staff. These findings will be further

discussed in Chapter Seven (Discussion Chapter). The following chapter presents the qualitative findings of this research which were gained from interviews with special education teachers.

CHAPTER SIX: THE QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

A qualitative analysis was conducted on transcripts from interviewing special education teachers. The interviews took place in Arabic and were transcribed and coded in Arabic, to best preserve the meaning. Transcription took place during the interviews and immediately afterwards. Transcripts were then coded into the four *a priori* thematic categories as detailed in 4.6.2. At this point they were finally translated into English. The data suggested further division into sub-themes within each theme. A table of these can be found at the beginning of each of the themes included in this chapter.

The overall analysis of the qualitative data revealed that there remain considerable obstacles to inclusion. It was revealed that schools delineate SEN provision as separate from mainstream education (section 6.2). The local education authority (LEA) also delineates inclusion as a separate system having separate general and special needs supervisors (section 6.3.2). Perhaps the most telling of all, even special education teachers themselves see their role as a separate, and fully situate their role within that (as revealed in the descriptive language they use (section 6.2.5). The parents, in general, was perceived by special teachers as supporting to the inclusion, but mostly abdicate their responsibility for their children's education to special teachers (section 6.4). However, the students with SEN themselves, when given the opportunity, thrive in an inclusive environment (section 6.5).

The analysis showed that the interviewees were mostly aware of this perpetuation of separation even though they themselves, to some extent, were accountable. They identified reasons for the perpetuation and offered a number of suggestions for

improving inclusive education. Quality training and support were identified by special teachers as being needed across the board; with general education teachers and staff, special education teachers and even parents identified as being in need of training as reported by most of the special education teachers (sections 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4.2).

The following discussions are split thematically, where theme one: inclusive school culture explores the extent to which schools have adopted inclusion; theme two: provision of professional development goes on to detail the need of in service training and support; theme three: parents of student with SEN involvement with school, explores the level of involvement and the factors that affect this. Finally, theme four: typically developing peers' interactions with students with SEN, explores the interactions between students and the factors affecting this.

As mentioned in chapter 4, teachers' names were coded as following (T1. N. D) (T2. N. D) indicates teachers from the North District, (T3. S. D) (T4. S. D) indicates teachers form the South District, (T5. E. D) (T6. E. D) indicates teachers from the East District, (T7. W. D) (T8. W. D) indicates teachers from the West District and (T9. C. D) (T10. C. D) (T11. C. D) indicates teachers from the Central District. Throughout this chapter, these cods will be used in refereeing to the interviewed teachers. In each of the themes, a table of sub-themes and codes will be presented and will be followed by detailed presentation of the qualitative finings supported by direct quotes from the interviewed teachers. At the end of each theme, a brief summary of the main findings will be presented.

6.2 Theme One: Inclusive Culture of Mainstream School

Table 6.1
Sub-themes and codes determined for the a priori theme of inclusive culture of mainstream school

Sub-theme	Codes
School's overall understanding of, and attitudes towards the inclusion and students with SEN.	Locational inclusion – separation in all aspects of school life – viewed as additional workload – responsibility of special education teachers only.
School leadership.	Different level of supportive leadership – insufficient knowledge and training.
Teachers' collaboration and relationships.	Non-collaborative relationship – lack of knowledge – insufficient training – fare of unknown – unwillingness to share responsibility of students with SEN– pay gap between teachers.
Inclusive activities.	Activities for students with SEN are done by special education teachers only – schools' activities do not account for the divers needs of students.
Language used within the school.	Discriminatory language use –labelling students based on disability.
Physical environment and resources.	Lack of prepared physical environment in schools – old school buildings – small classrooms – inaccessible entrances – lack of playgrounds – different level of availability of resources – teachers buy materials from their own expenses.

Coding of the interview transcripts identified several common aspects of inclusive culture and practice in KSA mainstream schools. Subthemes were identified (see table 6.1) and are discussed in detail later in this section.

6.2.1 School's Overall Understanding of and Attitudes towards Inclusion

Responses of the special education teachers to the question of how inclusion is understood and viewed by their schools' members were analysed. The predominant response from interviewees was that although inclusion is no longer a new concept, it remains as something that is both incomprehensively understood and incorrectly put into practice. This is clear from the teachers' responses, for example, teachers from the

South District reported: *"the concept of inclusion is there and inclusion isn't something unusual anymore, but they don't have the comprehensive understanding of it"* (T4. S. D). It was reported that this was due to a lack of awareness, a lack of knowledge and experience as well as a lack of understanding of the concept of inclusion. It was also discovered that there was a general apathy from general education teachers because of a perceived additional workload. Some of this resistance was found to be due to the perception that special education and general school are seen as separate departments. However, it was discovered that resistance to inclusion was to a lesser degree if the head teachers and/or the general education teachers had been specifically trained in the area.

Overall it was found that at best, inclusion is tolerated and at worst, seen as creating additional work. The majority of teachers interviewed reported that their schools lack a comprehensive understanding of inclusion, its meaning, principles and its practical applications. There was evidence of a variety of responses, with teachers in the West District reporting more positive practices, where inclusion is seen as making efforts to ensure students with SEN are participating in the schools' various activities (T7. W. D) (T8. W. D). However, some others expressed the view that, in practice, inclusion is sometimes just a case of placing students with SEN in mainstream schools, rather than adapting the system to meet their needs and to ensure their participation. For example, an illustrative quote:

> *'Inclusion in this school is just locational, we are a special school inside a mainstream school, we have separate teachers' room, separate classes and a separate playground for our students* (T3. S. D).'

A teacher from the Central District similarly stated: "*inclusion in this school is a little more than students with SEN existing separately along with the teachers who are*

responsible for them" (T10. C. D). Teachers in all the other districts echoed the same views.

It was also highlighted by interviewees how this limited understanding is due to a lack of awareness among general education teachers, despite the efforts of special education teachers to enlighten them about inclusion and students with SEN. For example, T4. S. D from the South District stated that, *"we lack the awareness in the school, although we conducted several workshops and we distributed different leaflets amongst all school members*", and a teacher from the East District stated: "*teachers and head teachers are not aware of inclusion and students with SEN*" (T6. E. D).

This lack of awareness is also evident from the view that educating students with SEN in mainstream schools is solely the responsibility of special education teachers, an attitude which is indicative of an unwillingness for collaboration and a limited understanding of what inclusion requires, which is "*... working for the benefit of the child needs to work together*" (T6. E. D).

Teachers interviewed from the Central District reported a lack of the shared responsibility as one of the obstacles they face in their schools;

> *We lack the shared care and responsibility of teaching and looking after students with SEN rather than viewing them as special education teachers' only responsibility* (T9. C. D).

This highlights how distributing responsibility is not always considered as important or necessary for enhancing inclusion of students with SEN. This is because, it is always perceived by member of schools' staff to be the responsibility of special education teachers only. Thus, perpetuating the culture of separation.

This raises the question about what could be the basis for such attitudes? The responses of most of the interviewees in different districts suggest that it may be attributed to a lack of sufficient knowledge relating to inclusion policies and practices and students with SEN. Regarding school head teachers, for example, the teacher in the West District described her school head teacher as supportive and knowledgeable in inclusive education. This, according to the teacher, is because the head teacher had a Diploma in Special Education. However, the teachers in other districts were more ambivalent about the leadership in their schools, in terms of their knowledge and understanding of the concept of inclusion and the implications of that for education, as the following quote illustrate: "*the school head teacher knowledge of inclusion is really limited. For her, inclusion is just that we are here with students with SEN*" (T4. S. D), and, "*the school head teacher does not have a background of special education, inclusion and students with SEN*" (T2. N D).

Likewise, general education teachers were described as not only lacking the knowledge but also the experience in including and teaching students with SEN. This is clear from the comments of teachers in the Central District that; "*the awareness and knowledge about inclusion and students' particular needs are very limited*" (T9. C. D), and "*they [general teachers] are not trained nor have a special education qualification*" (T10. C. D). This reiterates how limited knowledge and understanding about the inclusion of students with SEN has made school head teachers and staff unable to apply the principles of inclusive education in mainstream schools effectively. Therefore, it seems that unless school staff are trained and have some experience related to inclusive education, it is difficult to enhance the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. Interviewees reported that one of the main factors underpinning positive or negative attitudes and inclusive or non- inclusive practices was a lack of knowledge

and training related to inclusion of students with SEN. This point was reflected in an opinion reported by a teacher from the West District; "*teachers who have training in special education and inclusion are more positive and collaborative than the others*" (T7. W. D). Further discussion about training will be presented in section 6.3.1.

An understanding of inclusion is an important factor that may influence the attitudes towards the concept and practical application of inclusion. In order to establish what these attitudes were, special education teachers participating in this research were asked about the school's overall attitudes towards inclusion of students with SEN. The question asked was 'how would you describe the attitudes of general education teachers towards inclusion and students with SEN in the school?" Responses regarding the overall attitudes towards inclusion of students with SEN indicated that there seems to be an underlying apathy, with responses such as saying that inclusion is *"... inclusion in this school is not something denied but is not preferred"* (T8. W. D), as well as the more telling response that, *"they [school staff] have no problem with them [students with SEN] being in the school as long as they are our [special education teachers'] responsibility"* (T5. E. D), which is evidence of a distancing and a disassociation with the practice by general education teachers. Whilst this view was reported in the South, West and East District, a more negative response was reported in the Central District, where teaching students with SEN in mainstream schools is something additional rather than an integral part of the general education system: *"inclusion of students with SEN is seen as an additional workload for both the school head teacher and general education teachers"* (T10. C. D). Having outlined the general attitude toward inclusion, interviewees were asked to focus on and describe more specific areas, such as the attitudes of head teachers and the extent to which their school leadership is

supportive. The participation and collaboration of this party is key to determining and shaping a school's inclusive culture (Starratt, 2010).

6.2.2 School Leadership

The schools' head teachers have an enormous scope for influencing the successful implementation of inclusion because it is they who effectively establish and communicate the schools' inclusive culture through the leadership decisions that they make (Starrat, 2010). The importance of head teachers was expressed explicitly in the interviewees' responses: *"see, the important element in the school is the leader. If she has a positive attitude, she will certainly influence all other school members even the students"* (T11. C. D), and*: "head teachers should understand their influence on other school members. They are the role model in the school"* (T1. N. D).

Teachers interviewed in this research reported differing experiences with school head teachers, with some of the interviewees describing positive experiences with their schools' head teachers, and the rest reporting negative experiences. Interviewees from the East and West Districts reported positive experiences of their head teachers, highlighting their willingness to promote and support inclusion. This can be seen in the following quote:

> *[…] the school head teacher encourages inclusion. She always looks after students with SEN and always asks us if we need anything, if we are happy or not, even if we have problems she is doing her best for the inclusion programme* (T8. W. D).

Others reported that although head teachers are enthusiastic and would like to support and promote the inclusion of students with SEN, they lack the knowledge and background about inclusion and students with SEN to help them. As a result, their

supportive efforts are lacking, for example, a teacher in the West District stated; "*our head teacher is supportive and would like to promote inclusion but she lacks the training, experience and knowledge of what inclusion programs need"* (T7. W. D). Similarly, a teacher from the Central District (T9. C. D) stated that;

> *She [school head teacher] is trying her best, whenever she can but still viewed inclusion as only our responsibility. She says you [special education teachers] know what inclusion needs and therefore we are left on our own.*

In addition to this lack of initiative and understanding, some head teachers were not supportive at all;

> *Neither the head teacher nor the other staff are supportive. I am saying that because I was working in another school where the head teacher was really supportive. Everyone was working together. But here she [head teacher] is always in the general education side, we are left alone as, in their opinion, we are more knowledgeable of what inclusion needs and therefore it's just our responsibility* (T10. C. D).

The combination of conflict and lack of agreement between teachers and head teachers has been reported as a major factor in teachers feeling that they lack support. This is adequately summarised in the response of a teacher from the South District (T4. S. D);

> *We never agreed with the school management particularly the school head teacher. We always had arguments. She is completely withdrawn from anything related to us (special education teachers and students with SEN). She once suggested that we should establish our own separate management in the school so that nothing related to us came to her, but I refused of course because she is the head teacher and so she should do all of the administrating stuff.*

Overall, from special education teachers' responses in this research, it seems that some of the schools' head teachers support the idea of inclusion, but many still need more awareness and knowledge of the practicalities needed to enhance the inclusion of students with SEN. Hence, the important of effort to be made by the Ministry of Education in providing awareness programmes and training for head teachers (T4. S.D, T2. N. D and T5. E. D). This will be further discussed in the discussion chapter.

6.2.3 Teachers' Collaboration and Relationships

A reluctance to collaborate was a key element of the practices exhibited by general education teachers as reported by special education teachers participating in this research. Interviewees emphasised how collaboration between both general and special education teachers is essential for ensuring effective inclusion practices. However, the fact that many teachers do not collaborate posed a serious obstacle, and it was one that all of the interviewed special education teachers reported. For example, responses from the Central District are evidence of this common perception: *"the problem with general education teachers is that they do not want to collaborate, although it will not cost them a lot of effort, most of the efforts are entirely on me [special education teacher]"* (T9. C. D), and, *"rarely ever collaborate"* (T5. E. D), as well as, *"I would say 5 out of 30 general teachers might collaborate with me"* (T11. C. D).

The interviewed teachers also highlight the prevalence of this practice and how it is a major obstacle they face in their schools. In the other districts a slightly better view was reported, although with a very low number of teachers being described as willing to collaborate. Impatience and not wanting to take on extra work were two issues raised by the interviewees as contributing to the lack of collaboration. For example, in the West District a teacher stated;

> *I would say 3 out of 10 teachers might collaborate, they collaborate and get enthusiastic at the beginning but once they face any difficulty they immediately withdraw themselves* (T3. W. D).

A similar view was reported in the South District where;

> *"General education teachers sometimes collaborate with me in conducting activities for students with SEN, but soon they give up saying they don't know how to deal with the students; from my point of view, I see that they are impatient and not wanting any extra workload but under the pretext of that they don't know how to deal with students with SEN"* (T4. S. D).

Whilst this lack of collaboration is apparent in the Central District and appears slightly better in the South and the West Districts, a more positive response was reported in the East and the North Districts, where the teachers interviewed suggested that,

> *Teachers generally are busy doing their work, but when it comes to shared activities between both typically developing students and students with SEN, they don't mind collaborating with us [special education teachers]* (T5. E. D).

In addition, when a general education teacher has an invested interested in SEN provision they are collaborative: An interviewee from the North district reported receiving good support from a general education teacher that had a student with SEN in the same school. It has also been suggested by the interviewees that the lack of collaboration between general education teachers and special education teachers could be fuelled in part by the 30% salary incentive that is paid as a supplement to special education teachers. Whilst this has been praised in that it helps to attract qualified specialist teachers and acknowledges the value of their work, it also causes resentment amongst general education teachers who are expected to manage inclusive classrooms with more pupils, more lessons, no training and lower salaries. This was reported by a teacher from the Central District where she stated:

> *When I ask general education teachers to plan for shared activities between both typically developing students and students with SEN, I was simply answered; you have 30% extra in your salary to do that"* (T10. C. D).

An overriding belief that students with SEN are the sole responsibility of special education teachers was reported by all the interviewees in all of the districts as being the reason behind the non-collaborative relationship between teachers. Different experiences at different levels were reported, for example, teachers in the South District reported that general education teachers sometimes leave all the tasks related to students with SEN to the special education teachers. This occurs even if the special education teacher is not attending the lesson, because the general education teacher does not see

that she is supposed to be writing the students' daily report, for example. Another incident was highlighted in the East, where the teacher stated;

> *Once, I agreed with the general education teacher that she needs to do the student's worksheets in large print, before the lesson starts, but I was surprised after the class that the student only had a normal small print sheet and therefore she was unable to follow what the teacher was explaining and I when asked her she said I was busy printing 55 worksheets for the other students* (T7. E. D).

This incident demonstrates that the teacher was unwilling to undertake additional work for students with SEN, even though she was given detailed instructions on how to do so (T7. E. D).

At the classroom level, a teacher from the North District has also pointed out that: *"... she [general education teacher] ignores the students with SEN totally in the classroom as the students are seen as completely my responsibility"* (T2. N. D). This unwillingness to help or to take responsibility for students with SEN goes as far as incidents outside of the classroom. A case reported by a teacher from the Central District where:

> *Even if one of the students falls or needed help in the playground for example, they don't do anything but call the special education teachers to see to our students because she has others to deal with* (T9. C. D).

In this regard, a question arises as to whether the fear of having an additional workload, however, is the only factor contributing to the unwillingness of general education teachers to collaborate. Some interviewees have suggested that it is more nuanced than that, where a lack of knowledge and training on the part of general education teachers is also potentially a major factor. Evidence can be found in interviewee's responses, such as:

> *I had something urgent and I had to leave the class for some time. I asked one of the general education teachers to be in the class just until I am done with my*

> *work. She refused because she doesn't know how to deal with them [students with SEN]* (T4. S. D).

It is clear from both of these statements that the general education teachers are uncomfortable being left alone with students with SEN based on lack of knowledge and confidence in their ability to manage the students with SEN. Interviewees have discussed how these points are used as an excuse in that: "*general education teachers - not only do they not collaborate as they don't know how to deal with students with SEN but they exaggerate in that"* (T3. S. D), and also: *"we neither have studied special education nor do we have training in it, is the pretext of general education teachers to not collaborate in every activity that we [special education teachers] plan"* (T9. C. D).

In order to facilitate effective collaboration, therefore, interviewees have noted that general education teachers in inclusive schools should establish effective collaboration with special education teachers, and to be trained to teach students with SEN in the general classroom. They have highlighted how, *"... general education teachers must be patient and should acquire the skills to teach students with SEN and not just take it as an excuse"* (T5. E. D). Moreover, interviewees have emphasised how it is necessary to have a practical guide for teachers that will further educate and highlight why and how collaboration between teachers will enhance an inclusive school environment. One teacher stated that: *"there should be an establishment of rules and procedures for collaboration so that all parties are clear of their responsibility and not just being left to individual efforts"* (T4. S. D), as well as: *"we requested training workshops from the Ministry of Education and we are hoping for that"* (T1. N. D). Other teacher suggested conducting frequent meetings between both special education teachers and general education teachers, where it was stated;

> *Both special education teachers and general education teachers should get together and exchange knowledge, experience and solve problems related to the inclusion of students with SEN. By this, we will all learn from each other, become more knowledgeable and confident about our practices in the school* (T3. W. D).

From the interviewees' responses, it is clear that, by establishing rules and guidelines, procedures will be more systematic and less up to the individual. Not only is there a lack of clarity in the roles of teaching staff with respect to students with SEN, but also a lack of confidence and understanding amongst general education teachers. Due to the initial training received by special education teachers, and the extra incentives and higher pay awarded to them, many general education teachers feel reluctant to take on further responsibilities, particularly when they already have a workload that is difficult to manage. This again, perpetuates the culture of separation. Developing a sense of shared responsibility is essential to improving practice and generating a shared culture of inclusion, so all of these issues should be addressed. This will be focused upon in chapter Seven.

6.2.4 Inclusive Activities

It was discovered that inclusive activities were occasional at best with the general view being that SEN activities should be separate from general activities. It was revealed that yet again there was unwillingness from general education teachers to take on additional responsibility for students with SEN. The pay gap resentment could be at the core of this but also administration support was discovered to be no better.

Interviewees were asked about the efforts made in their schools to organise inclusive activities which encourage participation of students with SEN. From the interviewees

responses, activities that work for students with SEN are mostly occasionally. For example, teachers from the East District show that schools do conduct activities for students with SEN which are organised "*mostly occasionally in accordance with international events related to students with SEN, such as the international day of disability*" (T5. D E). In contrast, some interviewees in the Central District reported that activities for students with SEN are not at the forefront of priorities;

> *The school do not do any activities related to inclusion or students with SEN unless we ask for and actually do them ourselves, but at the same time, the school do different activities and events for the general education* (T10. C. D).

An interviewee from the North District highlighted how: *"the school is responsible for activities for general education and we [special education teachers] are responsible for activities for special education and students with SEN",* which is indicative of how there is a divide between students with SEN and typically developing peers to the extent that, "*even the activities are planned separately"* (T2. N. D). It was also highlighted by interviewees how, even though activities do exist, they are limited and from that limited selection few considered the students' special needs. A case was reported in the South District, where: *"in one colouring workshop, the printed sketches were too small for our students",* and how:

> *Students cannot join the physical activities that typically developing peers can do because sometimes it is hard for them and there are no alternatives, especially if the students have physical disabilities or are using wheelchairs"* (T4. S. D).

As highlighted earlier in the findings, the issue of workload is a major deterrent for collaboration and implementation of inclusive activities. This was clear in one case reported in the West District, where general education teachers preferred not to let typically developing students join the activity that special education teachers conduct: *"so that they don't have to monitor the students and stand with them, simply they don't want extra work"* (T8. W. D), which again reiterates the unwillingness to take on

additional responsibility. In conjunction with all of these issues, poor administrative support was also highlighted as a major obstacle. For example, a teacher in the South District described a situation where she suggested that a shared activity between students with SEN and typically developing peers to be arranged and established that enabled both set of students to "*work, interact and communicate with each other"* (T4. S. D). In this instance, the general education teacher initially agreed to facilitate this activity. However, following its first implementation the teacher reports that,

> *I was surprised after the activity by a letter from the school head teacher stating that; we do not want to conduct such activities again because they are without benefit.*

Such a reaction from an administrative level clearly, according to the teacher *"destroys all the efforts in promoting inclusion"* (T4. S. D) and acts as a major obstacle to inclusion, as without appropriate administrative support, inclusive education is unlikely to be effective.

6.2.5 Language Used within the School

Language used throughout a school environment in reference to students with SEN is often illustrative of the school's inclusive culture. When more discriminatory language is used and more name-calling or labelling is present, it is often an indication that the culture is not a positive one (DeWitt, 2011). In this research, surprisingly, special education teachers themselves perpetuate a culture of separation through the use of discriminatory language. In collecting interviewees' responses, one thing I noticed was that the special education teachers being interviewed used the terms *"our students"* to indicate students with SEN and *"their students"* to indicate typically developing peers. A case found in the Central District demonstrates this particularly clearly, with some similar examples in all the other districts.

Discriminatory name calling or labelling is another issue that reflects a school culture that harbours negativity toward inclusivity. Whilst interviewing teachers, I also noticed that they used the terms *"mental students"* (T5. E. D), *"mental classes"* (T7. W. D) and *"mental section"* (T11. C. D). When teachers were asked whether or not this term is used often in the school and whether they agree with its usage. Teachers perceived this language to be the common name and has also become the norm. For example, one response was that: *"we are not happy with the term but unfortunately that becomes the common name to indicate the special classes and the students with SEN"* (T11. C. D). This interviewee expanded by pointing out how: *"the sign at the school entrance if you notice also has this name on it".* The type of language used by teachers will be further discussed in the discussion chapter.

6.2.6 Physical Environment and Resources

Analysis of the interviews showed that only a small number of the schools had accessible environment and adequate resources for inclusion. No evidence came to light to suggest that there was an unwillingness to improve SEN provision, it is more likely that budgetary and practical issues are at play here: if a school is old and small, it is old and small for everyone. However, where they did have good resources it highlighted the importance of these for successful inclusion. Interviewees in this research raised the schools' physical environment as an obstacle to inclusion of students with SEN, which is also reflective of the school's inclusive culture (Corbett, 2001). When referring to physical environment, the areas focused on were space, adapted furniture, accessibility and a prepared playground, equipment and educational aids.

Three teachers out of eleven in the North, East and West Districts were happy with their physical environment of their schools and they thought it was prepared and accessible for students with SEN. Teachers felt that this was essential to improving the students' sense of belonging and their psychological well-being. For example, in one case, a North District teacher described how they had only recently moved to the school and noticed immediately how: "*it was built with the attention to how students with SEN will be studying in it."* She outlined details such as: *"the doors are accessible and the educational kitchen is adapted by low tables and handy cooking stuff, which students can easily use.*" It was felt by the teacher interviewed that this attention to detail extended to the well-being of the students, where;

> *Students with SEN really enjoy being in this school. One of the student's mother thanked me deeply as she felt her daughter's psychology improved and she used to hate school but now she is the first between her sister to wake up in the morning for school* (T2. N. D).

The other two interviewees in the East (T5. E. D) and West (T7. W. D) echoed similar positive experience in which it was emphasised how: "*the school environment is prepared and students are not struggling in moving around the school or in using its facilities and if they need help we do help them"*. A teacher in the Central District however reported a contrasting view, where: *"the school's environment is not prepared. It is very old and too small"* (T9. C. D). From the same district, a teacher in another school reported a similar view in which she mentioned an incident in her school stating;

> *One of our students who uses a wheelchair always struggles when she comes to the school because the entrance has no ramp. We kept asking the head teacher for it for ages. Her parents got upset and it was installed just a few days ago* (T11. C. D).

Hence, in this case the architecture of the school does not cater to disability, which is frustrating for all who are involved. Even though the teacher from the East District reported an accessible school environment, the lack of a prepared playground was an issue that hindered inclusion in another school in the same district, where: *"the playground is not helpful as it is not prepared at all, students with wheelchairs have to come from the back door of the school where the ramp is"* (T6. E. D), and: *"students need a stimulating playground, not only to play but also to learn"* (T2. N. D). Other interviewees supported the view that a stimulating playground is important and needed for students not only to play but also to learn. Moreover, all teachers who were interviewed mentioned the importance of the availability of resources and the required educational aids. For example, it was emphasised that;

> *If we are to promote inclusion, all the necessary resources, materials, equipment should be provided and the schools should be prepared prior to students with SEN being allocated* (T4. S. D).

However, the majority of teachers believed that there was a shortage of these resources. For example, "*the recourse room needs more materials and equipment"* (T3. N. D), in addition to a lack of administrative support in equipping schools:

> *Two of my colleagues and I prepared the resource room from A to Z with our own expenses and without any help from the administration because they say they don't have enough in the budget* (T2. N. D).

Although the majority of the schools' buildings were reported to be insufficiently prepared and lacking the resources, there were some positive examples of the availability of resources in schools and evidence of money being directed towards resourcing inclusion and their huge impact upon improving the experience of both students with SEN and typically developing peers in the school. For example, one teacher describes how:

> *We have a resources room that the previous special education teachers and the head teacher prepared from the school budget. Although it is small and crowded it is still very beneficial* (T10. C. D).

Another interviewee describes how there are two rooms with educational aids;

> *Materials and equipment, one with a large screen for watching films for example, another for larger equipment such as large printers, brail printers and for educational materials such as bodies or skeleton models and so on. Both general education and special education use them* (T7. W. D).

From the overall analysis of teachers' interviewees in the aspect of the inclusive culture, it can be concluded that a culture of separation was still perpetuated and the policy of inclusion seemed not been sufficiently implemented. A very clear 'us' and 'them' conceptualization was evident. Inertia towards a cultural shift within schools was identified in understanding and attitudes towards inclusion. There was resistance identified from school staff including head teachers and general education teachers. In addition, inclusive activities were often hard to organise, if not frowned upon. This is despite the fact that the evidence showed that the students themselves enjoyed and benefited from inclusive education.

The most telling finding was the way in which the interviewees used language to describe themselves and students with SEN. It was evident that culturally within the schools even the special education teachers saw 'our' students with SEN as separate to 'their' typically developing students. However, where budgets and practicalities allowed, there was some reported evidence that progress had been made, in a small number of schools, in making the physical environment of the schools inclusive. In addition, the analysis revealed that across the board there was a consistent lack of collaboration from general education teachers. It was reported that general education teachers lacked the patience to manage inclusive activities or classroom in which

students with SEN are and perceive them as extra workload. It was discovered that students with SEN were seen as solely the responsibility of the special education teachers, with general education teachers stating that they themselves were untrained to teach students with SEN. In addition, one of the mostly reported issue behind the lack of collaboration is a pay gap jealousy between teachers as will be shown later in this section.

The analysis also revealed that across the board there was a consistent lack of collaboration from general education teachers. It was reported that general education teachers lacked the patience to manage inclusive activities or classroom in which students with SEN are and perceive them as extra workload. It was discovered that students with SEN were seen as solely the responsibility of the special education teachers, with general education teachers stating that they themselves were untrained to teach students with SEN. In addition, one of the mostly reported issue behind the lack of collaboration is a pay gap jealousy between teachers as will be shown later in this section. Specialist training with supporting guides containing working rules and procedures are, according to the interviewees, what are needed. Unprepared physical environment of the schools, as well as the insufficient educational resources were identified as two main obstacles teachers face in promoting inclusion. These areas are indicative of the degree to which the school culture is inclusive. This will be further discussed as an indicator of the inclusive culture of mainstream schools later in the discussion chapter.

6.3 Theme Two: The Provision of Professional Development for Staff

Table 6.2
Sub-themes and codes determined for the a priori theme of the provision of professional development for teachers

Sub-themes	Codes
Training and qualifications.	Lack of in-service training, miss-match between pre-service training and real practice for special education teachers -lack of collaboration between professionals- lack of learning communities.
Specialist human support.	Insufficient supervisor visits support - lack of residential special education supervisors - lack of special provision providers in schools (speech therapist, physiotherapist).

This section deals with the provision of professional development for teachers as coded by an analysis of the transcripts. It is split into two sub-themes that are of 'training and qualifications' and 'specialist human support'. In both cases, it was revealed that special education teachers felt that both were lacking.

6.3.1 Training and Qualifications

All of the interviewees in the research discussed how training for working with students with SEN was important for developing the knowledge base of all the schools' staff, as then they would be better equipped to teach students with SEN and manage inclusive schools. Hence, a lack of training was seen as a major obstacle to inclusion by most of the interviewees, where they highlighted how there was no training currently being offered to in-service, both general and special education teachers, for working with students with SEN. This was an issue in all of the five districts but particularly clear in the Central District according to the interviewees. For example, one interviewee stated:

> *The general education teachers and the head teacher do not have a special education background and are not trained to work with students with SEN and there are no training courses being offered to them.* (T9. C. D).

Similarly, teacher in the South District pointed out how teachers can have training if they are lucky enough to be nominated by the school head teacher: *"sometimes the school head teacher nominates one or two of us to attend a training programmes that is conducted in the special education administration"* (T4. S. D).

Teachers in the East District reported that they do conduct training workshops in their schools: *"we as special education teachers tried to conduct training workshops for general education teachers"* (T5. E. D), but the issue they face is that;

> *Teachers don't always attend, sometimes they say they are busy, sometimes they have classes. Honestly, normally if training is not from the LEA, then it is perceived less important and therefore they do not attend* (T5. E. D).

A number of teachers echoed the same view, although this was perceived to be the responsibility of the Ministry of Education: "*although it is the responsibility of Ministry of Education to provide training for schools' staff, we [special education teachers] ourselves do training for teachers […]"* (T11. C. D). Another similar view was reported by (T6. E. D) who explained this issue by stating:

> *I think they do not want to feel that special education teachers are more knowledgeable than they are, especially if the special education teachers have less teaching experience than the general education teachers do*.

An interviewee in the South District reported that, similarly they help the newly graduated teachers, as well as the general education teachers, by conducting initial training. However, they hope to have training for themselves as well in order to be updated in their knowledge and methods of teaching students with SEN and to be also able to continue to train the other members of the school;

> *we also need training and specialists to help us improve ourselves, which is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education to provide the training for both us [special education teachers] and general education teachers"* (T4. S. D).

A similar view of the need for in-service training for special education teachers was also reported in the East District, where a teacher highlighted that:

> *[…] the newly graduated special education teachers, even if they have a special education qualification, they still need in service training because the theory is far different from the real practice which I faced when I was first employed here* (T5. E. D).

The pre-service training was deemed by teachers to be insufficient in terms of length and though that it would have been better if they have had longer training courses. This was evidenced in the teachers' responses where in the South District teachers reported; *"I have been trained for only one term as part of the undergraduate degree requirement",* (T3. S. D), and another teacher in the East District reported; *"the pre-service training should have been longer"* (T6. E. D) and she suggested that: *"the Ministry of Education should extend the pre-service training time for student teachers, this will help them a lot when they come into the profession".* Another view was suggested by teachers in other districts is that, pre-service training should not only be for special education teachers, but also general education teachers. For example, T2. N. D, suggested that;

> *Since the Ministry of Education has implemented inclusion in mainstream schools, all teachers both general education teachers and special education teachers should be trained to work in inclusive schools as part of their undergraduate degree before they enter the profession, this will help in many areas including enhancing positive attitudes towards inclusion and students with SEN, also in understanding the students' needs and enhancing inclusive practices.*

As evidenced from the teacher's responses even when these teachers had the relevant experience to teach students with SEN, they would still welcome, and were actively seeking more training courses.

A comparison between districts was raise by teachers in the West and East Districts reported that they have insufficient training courses provided to them and that training programmes are mainly centred in the Central District;

> *In here there are no specialists to conduct this sort of training workshops like in Riyadh, in there they have a plenty of different training course from which they can chose and attend* (T8. W. D).

However, despite the perceptions of teachers outside of the Central District, teachers from within the Central District also reported themselves as lacking the sufficient level of training. In this regard, a teacher from the Central District reported that for the available training courses, teachers have to register and mostly their names: "*... will be on the waiting list as it is always full and teacher may wait for a whole year for her turn in the queue for the training course"* (T11. C. D). The other available training courses are not free and the teachers have to pay to attend: *"there are a variety of training programmes arranged by special centres, like in the evening times, but it's not free and you have to pay to attend",* as reported by (T9. C. D). In the South District, however, one of the interviewees (T3. S. D) stated that in her school, teachers received in-service training: *"we sometimes have training courses in the school and in training centres at evening times".* This view was not shared by (T4. S. D) from the same district, where she stated: *"there is training but it is not enough, we need more for all staff in the school, including ourselves"*.

Overall, there was a consensus that training would contribute to improvements in both the skills of teachers when working with students with SEN, as well as their attitudes and motivation towards inclusion. Firstly, it is necessary for training to be delivered to teachers consistently, regardless of their location. Secondly, there is a case for provision of training to general education teachers as a way of enabling them, giving them confidence and changing their attitudes towards collaboration with special education

teachers. This is summed up best by one respondent who added that: *"for inclusion to be successful, on-going training programs for both us [special education teachers] and for other staff should be provided"* (T9. C. D).

6.3.2 Specialist Human Support

The availability of specialist support staff was mentioned by special education teachers interviewed in this research. They felt that they needed specialists' advice to help them manage the challenges that inclusion brings. In this regard, when teachers in the South District were asked about the extent to which they receive specialist support and follow-up supervision from special education supervisors, a positive experience was reported where an interviewee stated that:

> *The special education supervisor does several visits to the school, monitoring, supervising and also giving feedback and suggestions about teaching students with SEN. Also, she goes over any new approaches that she knows are useful* (T4. S. D).

However, a teacher from the West District reported a less positive experience insofar as the level of support available was insufficient. According to the teacher, "*special education supervisors visit and give us instructions and feedback at the school, but this is rare"* (T8. W. D). This was the same in the East District, where only a general supervisor regularly visits the school, as T6. E. D stated:

> *Only general education supervisors come to school for monitoring and attending classes to assess general education teachers. Special supervisor came only at the beginning of the year.*

In an experience reported in the Central District, one teacher reported insufficient supervisor visits to her current school compared to the school in which she was previously working, which was: *"right next to the LEA, and the special education supervisor regularly came to the school monitoring, supervising, advising and guiding*

the teachers. This school is more than an hour away from the LEA and I could say she [special education supervisor] come only two times this year" (T9. C. D). The teacher explained that it was due to the far distance between the LEA in which special education supervisors are and the schools which they supervise. It seems here that the location of schools plays a role in the provision of special education supervision. This will be discussed in greater detail later in this thesis.

Another issue raised by most of the interviewed teachers in this regard is the need for Residential Special Education Supervisors (RSES) in the school to compensate the insufficient supervisors and the lack of training. For example, a teacher in the West District reported the need for RSES. Similarly, in the North District, it was reported that RSES are important for the school insofar as they can provide consultation, guidance and advice for both general and special education teachers who teach students with SEN; *"we have no residential special educational supervisor in our school to whom we can refer whenever we need to"* (T1. N. D). The availability of RSESs will, according to (T1. N. D) dispense the need for the special supervisor from the LEA as: "*[…] she will provide what we need from guidance, monitoring and will communicate our voice to the LEA"*.

Teachers also highlighted the point that the need for supervisors was not only based on consultation and giving advice and guidance, but rather they were perceived as necessary interim between the Ministry of Education and the teachers. They reported that the speed and appropriateness of response given to an educational supervisors regarding requests for equipment and resources is usually faster than when they are given to the school head teacher, which is a case reported in the North District;

> *When the educational supervisor comes to school we [special education teachers] give her a list of requests because they are provided more quickly and they speed up responses to our requests* (T1. N.D).

A further factor relating to the availability of specialist support, is the issue of availability of professionals within the school, such as psychologists, speech therapists and physiotherapists. In one case, it was reported in the Central District that two schools shared one speech therapist, a situation that the teacher was not very happy with and stated that: "*the Ministry of Education should ensure that every school should have professionals as they play very important roles in schools*" (T9. C. D). Another teacher in the Central District reported that they only have a psychologist in the school and other professionals are based in special schools, and therefore, students must be referred to them according to the need. A teacher from the South District reported a more positive situation where she mentioned that: "*we have a psychologist based on the school long ago, but the speech therapist was recently transferred to this school"* (T4. S. D).

Teachers from the East District and the West District reported that they were in a similar situation, with psychologists being the only professionals available in their school and other professionals being based in special schools and in other medical centres where students are referred to as required. A teacher from the East District was not satisfied with this situation, particularly in the case where:

> *The student's parents take her one day a week outside the school for her speech and language therapy sessions which could be easily given to her in the school if we have therapists, or at least if the school head teacher communicates with LEA to arrange for the therapists to come one day in the week to the child in the school* (T8. E. D).

Given that, the teacher hoped for *"especially speech therapist"* to be based in the school instead of referring the students to the special institutions in which those professionals are located.

Given the above, it can be concluded that the analysis of the teachers' interviews in the aspect of professional development revealed that training is central to promoting inclusion of students with SEN. Training for not only head teachers and general education teachers, but also it was felt that on-going training for special education teachers is also essential. Some special education teachers had taken it upon themselves to run training courses for their colleagues but this was generally met with resistance. There was some training available for special education teachers, but this was rare in all of the districts and in Central non-existent. Notably, teachers from outside the Central Districts felt that teachers in the Central Districts had more training, but Central special education teachers reported the opposing view. The overall analysis of the interviews also revealed that there is insufficient support from specialist education supervisors in all of the districts except in the South District. It was suggested that the distance of school from the LEA was a factor in the number of visits. Although the East District experienced plenty of supervisory visits, most of which were from general education supervisors but not special education supervisors. Residential Special Education Supervisors (RSES) were seen as a solution to the lack of special education supervisor from the LEA and the lack of training. The guidance and advice this role would facilitate was perceived very important. Moreover, it was felt that more specialists, like speech therapists and psychologists, should be available to schools. The following discusses these areas in more detail. This will be further discussed later in the discussion chapter.

6.4 Theme Three: The Involvement and Collaboration of Parents of Students with SEN with the School

Table 6.3

Sub-themes and codes determined for the a priori theme of the involvement and collaboration of parents of students with SEN with the school.

Sub-theme	Codes
Parents involvement.	Positive attitudes – negative attitudes – lack of collaboration.
Factors affecting the level of parent' Involvement.	Educational level – low expectation about child's potential to learn- and low expectation of parents about being able to enhance their children's learning- minimum level of efforts made by school to encourage parents' involvement- no parents voice in IEPs.

This section discusses the findings concerning the aspect of parents of students with SEN involvement and collaboration with the school. The overall analysis of special education teachers' interviews showed that most parents are happy that their children are in mainstream schools but at the same time their level of collaboration and involvement with school were reported to be lacking, which will be presented in more details in section (section 6.4.1). Teachers reported a number of factors that they believe to be behind this lack of involvement which is presented in more detailed later in section 4.6.2.

6.4.1 Parents of Students with SEN and their Involvement with School

In this aspect, teachers in this research were asked about the extent to which there is communication between the school and the family, the form of communication, how useful this communication is and how often such communication takes place. The majority of special education teachers interviewed in different districts reported that parents with whom they have dealt displayed a positive attitude towards including their children in mainstream schools. They mentioned how: *"parents are happy that their*

daughters are studying in mainstream schools, and actually they prefer sending their children to mainstream schools rather than special schools" (T3. S. D). This was the view of most teachers, except one teacher from the North District, where she stated:

> *Not all the parents are happy with the inclusion of their children, one of the student's mother was not happy transferring her daughter from special school to mainstream school as she was concern that her daughter's needs might not be meet in the mainstream school and that her daughter already get used to the environment of special school* (T2. N. D).

However, whilst parents were seen to be happy to include their children in a mainstream school, their level of collaboration and involvement with the school has been described as lacking. This was reported by the large majority of teachers where in the North District, for example, it was reported that, *"parents do not help us to improve the level of their daughters' educational attainment"* (T2. N. D). In the South District, some teachers have discussed how parents only communicate with them occasionally and *"they communicate when there is an event or parents' meeting"* (T4. S. D). Similarly, in the West District, parents communicate very rarely and to the extent that, *"parents communicate with the school at the beginning of the year and then we never see them again"* (T9. C. D).

In contrast, only two teachers, one in the East and one in the South, reported that parents with whom they deal are actively collaborating with the school in that:

> *The mother always contacts the school and asks to talk to me asking about her daughter's progress. She asks me to take photos of the activities I used with the children in the class so that she can use them at home with her daughter* (T3. S. D).

The other parent mentioned was a general education teacher in the same school and therefore: *"she follows up her daughter's progress with me every day, obviously"* (T1. N. D). In the East District, a teacher reported similar positive experience with parents, where she mentioned: "*we [special education teachers and parents of students with*

SEN] created a WhatsApp group in which we exchange information, it is very useful" (T6. E. D).

Overall, special education teachers had a fairly consistent view that parents could be doing more to support the education of students with SEN. Therefore, teachers were asked why they think parents are not collaborating and not involving themselves enough in their children's learning? Their responses included factors that they think are behind the parents' insufficient level of involvement that will be presented in the following sub-theme.

6.4.2 Factors affecting parents' attitudes and involvement

The family's educational level, was reported by the majority of the interviewees as a major factor that influences the parents' level of collaboration and involvement with the school regarding their children's education; as stated by a teacher from the North, East and South Districts respectively: *"we have uneducated parents, who cannot really realize the need of their child to attend school, let alone communicate actively with the school"* (T2. N. D) and: *"the educational level of parents plays a very important role"* (T6. E. D), and that: *"their involvement really depends on the educational level"* (T3. S. D). Other teachers from the West and Central District echoed the same opinion about the parents' educational level.

Another issue reported by most of the teachers, including the teachers in the North District, in relation to the reasons as to why parents are not collaborating enough with their school are the low expectations surrounding their children's ability to gain knowledge and therefore they show: "*little interest in their child's progression"* (T2.

N. D). This is also clear from an account given by a teacher in the South, where: *"one parent was invited to the school as her daughter never did her homework, she said: as long as she goes and talks to some friends and has fun that is enough* (T4. S. D).

Moving on to low expectation, teachers reported that parents not only have low expectations for their children but also for themselves regarding their own ability to help and enhance their children's development, where one teacher (T2. N. D) stated that when discussing homework or certain behaviour of the student with the mother: *"[…] the mother says you are more expert than me",* a view that most of the teachers have echoed. Teachers believe that this has also lead parents to rely heavily on teachers because they feel that teachers are the experts in what their children need, and so the responsibility of transmitting valuable information and providing education to their children lay solely with the teachers. This was evidenced in T9. C. D response that, *[…] they [parents]rely totally on us [special education teachers] in everything related to the child's education* (T19. C. D). Similarly reported in the North, where the teacher stated:

> *In one parents' meeting I was discussing the progress of her daughter and what activities help her and them most and can the mother do that at home for the students she replays; […]do whatever you think is appropriate, you know more than me (*T2. N. D)

Other factors that contribute to limiting parents' collaboration with school and their involvement in their children's education were also mentioned by teachers. These include lack of transportation (T4. S. D), having more children with whom the mother has to stay (T3. S. D), work and busy life style (T5. E. D). This was made clear following questions asked to teachers regarding the forms of parents' involvement with the school, for example, whether or not they are involved in forming the students' IEPs.

The majority of teachers responded that parents rarely if ever participate in forming the students IEP. For example, one stated that: *"parents have never been involved in forming the IEP"* (T7. W. D). In this regard, teachers admitted that not involving the parents in forming their children's IEP: *"[…] is a joint fault, we [special education teachers] neither give them a chance because we get used to making it alone, nor they [parents] ever asked about it"* (T7. W. D). this was the mostly reported view by other teachers in that they do not give parents a chance or invite them because this has become unquestionably the responsibility of special education teachers only: *"[…] the IEP is my only responsibility"* (T2. N. D), "*[…] parents never join in forming the IEP, but they sign it after I am done with it, if they agree with it",* and: *"[…] it's only me as a special education teacher who forms the students' IEP"* (T8. W. D).

Given that teachers perceive parental involvement as being insufficient, the question is then what has been done to enhance parents' involvement. In this regards the two main events mostly reported by the teachers are: *"activities that the school conducts for parents are mainly parents' meetings which are once a term, but parents can come into the school any day they want to"* (T1. N. D). The majority of teachers reported the same types of activity. None of the interviewed teachers reported parents' training workshops or other activities in which parents can participate and get involved in their children's education, for example: *"the school conduct parents' meetings but not training workshops for them"* (T5. E. D), and: "*there have never been activities where parents attend with their children*" (T1. N. D). The conduction of awareness and training workshops were perceived by teachers to be the responsibility of Ministry of Education and not the school, where: *"we can't educate parents, the Ministry of Education is responsible for establish literacy programs for them"* (T5. E. D).

In the light of this, it was evident that the interviewees believed more should be done to encourage collaboration and communication as they perceive the parents as an important factor in facilitating the success of inclusion where for example, T6. E. D stated; "*parents are very important in enhancing their children inclusion*", and T1. N. D stated*; "there should be a strong collaborative relationship between the school and the parents, as this is important factor in the success of inclusion"*. Teachers, therefore, have recommended that there should be some form of education or training programmes for parents. Statements such as: "*the Ministry of Education - or at least the LEA - should educate parents and establish parents' organisations in which parents can attend, learn and exchange knowledge and experience"* (T9. C. D), *"the Ministry of Education should educate parents about inclusion and students with SEN"* (T2. N. D), and *"providing transportations for parents from and to school would very much facilitate their involvement"* (T4. S. D) as well as: *"develop the relationship between home and school"* (T10. C. D), were frequent throughout the interviews. These suggestions were highlighted as being of the utmost importance, especially in the context of KSA and will therefore be discussed later in the discussion chapter.

From the above, it can be concluded that, analysis of teachers interviews in the aspect of parents' involvement revealed that, there were several factors inhibiting parents' involvement with their child in school. There were various life commitment reasons identified, but generally the interviewees felt that the education level of parents correlated with their level of involvement in their child in school: The lower the education level, the less they were involved. Parent's low expectation of what their child could achieve as well as parents' low expectations of themselves to be able to enhance their children's education were also reported to be decreasing their level of

involvement and collaboration with school. Teachers reported some effort to involve parents, but these were mainly; parent's meetings and schools' ceremonies and no evidence of any other awareness, training or parent-child activities. In addition, there was no evidence of parents' involvement in the children's IEP and almost they have no voice in that. Teachers themselves admitted that they do not involve parents in the IEP as this has been unquestionably the special teachers' duty. Although the interviewees could identify why there may be a lack of parental involvement they also felt that it was not their responsibility to educate parents, preferring to shift the responsibility of this to the Ministry of Education or LEA. Teachers, have also recommended that there should be some form of education or training programmes for parents to be conducted by the Ministry of Education. These suggestions were highlighted as being of the utmost importance, especially in the context of KSA and will therefore be discussed later in the discussion chapter.

6.5 Theme Four: Typically Developing Peers' Interaction with Students with SEN

Table 6.4

Sub-theme and codes determined for the a priori theme of typically developing peers' interactions with students with SEN

Sub-theme	Codes
Interactions between typically developing peers and students with SEN.	Friendships and positive interactions –positive and negative behavioural issues – positive impact of inclusion on both set of students.
Factors influencing peers' interactions.	Family factors – previous experience with individuals with SEN – time factor– encouraging activities.

This section discusses the findings around how the typically developing students themselves react to inclusion and their peers with SEN as well as the extent to which

students with SEN are accepted and interacted with and what that interaction entails (section 6.5.1). This will be followed by a discussion of factors that influence students' interaction and to what extent they facilitated or hindered inclusion (section 6.5.2).

6.5.1 Interactions between typically developing peers and students with SEN

In this regard, special education teachers were asked, how they see the acceptance and interactions between typically developing students and their peers with SEN, how they feel this interaction facilitates or hinders inclusion of students with SEN, to what extent do schools encourage and facilitate peers' interaction and what difficulties they think hinder the interaction between students and ultimately may hinder the inclusion?

Overall, the teachers' responses indicated that interactions between both student groups are generally positive and teachers believed that this has helped in facilitating the inclusion of students with SEN. According to most of the teachers, typically developing students accept their peers with SEN and are making friendships with them. The teachers' positive responses in this regard were seen in that typically developing students often helped, made friends and played with peers with SEN. For example, in the East District, it was highlighted how relationships between students oftentimes took the form of helpful exchanges:

> *I remember once when the bell of the break time rang, I saw the student helping her disabled friend to get her breakfast box out of the bag and she carried it for her to the break hall* (T5. E. D).

Similarly, in the West District, a teacher described an event where:

> *One of the typically developing students was helping her friend with SEN in climbing the stairs and carrying her bag for her. I thanked her and praised her for this and she was really happy* (T8. W. D).

Many of the interviewed teachers gave positive accounts of how inclusion in mainstream schools and the positive interaction between typically developing students and students with SEN have a high impact upon the wellbeing and education experience of the students with SEN. Fostering social relationships in schools and building a supportive school network, which includes other students, was seen as key to promoting inclusion. This was clear from the benefit that the teachers noticed in both groups of students. Evidence regarding this is contained in the following example, where: "*they are not only interacting, but also they learning a lot from each other"* (T3. S. D). Similarly, a teacher from the Central District mentioned: *"to be honest, both typically developing students and their peers with SEN, benefit from inclusion"* (T9. C. D). Teachers, therefore, were asked in what ways students benefit from the interactions with each other and from inclusion as a whole. Responses on the benefits of inclusion are reported under three main headings: psychological, social, and academic benefits. Psychological benefits identified by special education teachers included developing self-esteem and self-confidence, something which was highlighted by the majority of the interviewed teachers. For example, "*students with SEN developed a self-esteem and became more confident*" (T7. W. D), and: "… *they become more confident and are more easy going than before*" (T5. E. D), and: "*it builds their self-confidence and they now talk for themselves*" (T11. C. D), which are responses of the teachers in the West, East and Central District respectively.

The key social benefits identified, however, were the development of social skills and the ability for making friendships, as well as learning through the modelling of appropriate behaviours, as highlighted by the interviewed teachers in the Central District: "*they used to be quiet and isolated, whereas now almost every student has a*

friend from general education" (T9. C. D). This was attributed by the teacher to the activities, such as "*Friends of Students with SEN Club*" (T9. C. D), which special education teachers implemented in order to get both students with SEN and typically developing students to interact. In another response in the East District, the teacher highlighted the social benefits as:

> *At the beginning, students with SEN were isolated but with time they start to develop friendships with other students, they also develop desirable social habits like greeting when they enter the class, and asking for permission before leaving the class* (T2. E. D)

Similarly, a teacher in the West District reported:

> *They remove waste after breakfast break, they learn to walk in lines and respect queues and they try to imitate their typically developing peers' behaviours, like in the way they speak, eat and walk* (T4. W. D).

The opportunity for social interaction as a part of inclusion was also fundamental, according to interviewees, in improving the speech of students with SEN. In giving students with SEN more opportunities to communicate, "*their speech improved a lot"* (T1. N. D), and:

> O*ne of the students never talked when she came to the school but now she can say a complete coherent sentence. Her mother also noticed this and mentioned it when she came to one of the parents' meetings* (T3. S. D).

Another teacher in the Central District reported that:

> *Previously I was not able to understand what she says, but now her speech is much more clear and understandable, and she uses words that her friend from general education uses* (T9. C. D).

In addition, a teacher in the same district stated:

> *I notice that they now try to prove themselves and they participate in the morning casting by reading articles, singing with other students, asking questions and answering questions in front of all the students* (T10. C. D).

Hence, increased interaction improved both speech and the confidence of students with SEN.

In addition, some academic benefits were reported by a number of teachers, for example, in the West District: "… *their academic performance is gradually improving even though they couldn't master some skills*" (T7. W. D), and another teacher in the same district stated that: "*they are gaining education skills from typically developing peers and they are making relatively good academic progress*" (T8. W. D). A similar response was given by a teacher in the Central District, where she incorporated a number of perspectives into a single reply, stating:

> *Students with SEN not only developed their personality to be like their typically developing peers but also, they have the chance to understand some activities through their peers' tutoring […] peers are the best teachers to them; also inclusion gives them the chance to do similar things to typically developing students at school and therefore increases their sense of belonging* (T11. C. D).

The benefits of collaboration and interaction were not only noticed for students with SEN, but also for typically developing students. This was a benefit noticed by teachers in the North District, where: "*typically developing students also improve in their interactions with the students with SEN through collaboration*" (T3. N. D). The response of a teacher from the East District further supported this view: "*inclusion also has positive effects on students of the general education in the classroom, because it helps them to become accepting of people who are different*" (T6. E. D).

Whilst this was the point of view of the majority of the interviewees, negative exceptions were reported by two teachers. One teacher from the North District and she stated that: "*students with SEN learnt inappropriate words for their typically developing peers*" (T1. N. D). The other example was in the Central District, where the teacher mentioned: *"typically developing students learned to hit their peer with*

SEN as they hit them first, so they react in the same way back" (T11. C. D). Given the above, teachers were then asked what underlying factors that they think contribute to, facilitate, or otherwise obstruct the students' interactions and relationships. A number of factors were mentioned by the interviewed teachers and are discussed in the following sub-theme.

6.5.2 Factors influencing peers' interactions

An important factor that teachers think influences the attitudes and interactions of typically developing students towards those with SEN is that of the surrounding culture and the community. This mainly includes parents, insofar as family plays an important role in enhancing and promoting positive or negative attitudes of their children. For example, this was made clear in an incident mentioned by a teacher from the West District, where she stated:

> *Parents are very important in building positive attitudes in their children. For example, on the international day for persons with disabilities, one of the general education students brought a big plate of cupcakes to celebrate with friends with SEN and she was saying that her mother made them and told her to share them with students with SEN* (T8. W. D).

These kinds of initiatives from parents obviously promote acceptance and the respect of peers with SEN, as mentioned by the teacher. Whilst this was a positive example mentioned in the West, a contrasting view, which the teacher considered as an obstacle that she faced in some cases, was reported in the North District, where:

> *One of the students' mother always comes and complains about including students with SEN in the same classes of her daughter although it is only one or two classes, but she doesn't want this to affect her daughter* (T2. N. D).

Another factor reported is having previous experience or contact with an individual with SEN. This was clear when one of the interviewed teachers discussed a case of a

student who had a very positive attitude towards students with SEN in the school, which was seen by the teacher to be based on her experiences at home:

> *One of the students has two family members who are deaf and therefore she knows sign language, which she uses with the deaf peers in the school, and she translates for her other typically developing friends* (T11. C. D).

Thus, according to the teacher, having prior experience with individuals with SEN played an important role in forming positive attitudes and acceptance of others with SEN. From this example, knowing how to communicate with students with SEN, using sign language in this case, facilitated both students' interaction.

Other teachers, however, believe that this positive interaction comes spontaneously with time and they ultimately accept each other. For example, in the South District one of the teachers reported that:

> *[…] at the beginning typically developing peers used to be scared of disabled students and just avoided them but with time we noticed that they got used to each other and gradually made some contact with them and now they are actually friends. It just takes some time* (T9. S. D).

The issue of time was similarly reported by other teachers, for example, in the North (T2. N. D) stated:

> *At stage one where new typically developing students come to the school as their first time, they are reluctant to interact with students with SEN, but after some time, they start interacting.*

Some other interviewees believed that the inclusive activities and communities they created and in which both had the opportunity to communicate, were an effective way to foster acceptance and positive interaction. Special education teachers reported a number of strategies and activities they use to encourage that. For example, a teacher in the Central District illustrates this in the following example:

> *We created a club that we called Friends of Students with SEN in which we invited typically developing peers to establish friendships with peers who have SEN and this friendship included something like helping in class activities, looking after her when getting out of school to the bus and that sort of thing. The students involved in this club were then given prizes in front of the entire school so as to thank them for helping their peers with SEN and at the same time to encourage others to do the same. In my view, I think this initiative was 99% successful in building and encouraging friendship and collaboration between students and of course acceptance.* (T9. C. D).

Another example was using a reinforcement board, which was mentioned in the North, where the teacher stated:

> *I use reinforcement board in the school hall on which all typically developing peers and students with SEN names are and through which they collect points every time they help, share and play together and by the end of the week we praise the students with highest number of points collected ... the school continued using the same strategy as it is very helpful. Although some students do not care about prizes and still avoid interacting with peers with SEN but for the most it works really well* (T1. N. D).

Reinforcement strategies were also mention by almost all of the other teachers as a way of foster acceptance and positive interaction (T5. E. D, T4. S. D and T11. C. D). These strategies, according to the teachers were very useful in promote positive interactions between students and played an important role in the enhancement of inclusion. However, teachers reported that they lack the support and collaboration from other member of staff in their schools including head teacher and general education teachers, in conducting or planning activities that encourage both students' interaction. For example, T5. E. D reported: *"general education teachers do not help in getting the students interact and if activities to be conducted then it is the special education teachers' responsibilities only*". Another teacher in the South reported that, instead of being supportive a general education teacher was reported as being a hindrance to the students' interaction, where: *"[…] some students avoid interacting with peers with SEN just to not to be told off by their teacher"* (T4. S. D). A similar case was reported by (T11. C. D), but she justified that as: *"[…] I think most of it is fear from their students*

[typically developing students] harming the student with SEN or causing any problem and she will be her responsibility". At the same time, according to (T11. C. D), this is destroying the efforts they put in to getting both groups of students interacting together and building positive relationships.

From the interviewees' responses in this aspect, the identified obstacle is the lack of a shared responsibility between school staff in fostering students' interactions and promoting the inclusion. It was suggested by teachers, therefore, that better inclusive practices and more positive relationship between both sets of students will be enhanced *"if head teachers and teachers collaborate with us [special education teachers] and activate their role*" (T5. E. D) and in the South District, T4. S. D reported;

> *Head teacher is role model for everyone in the school, if she promotes these activities, in which both typically developing peers and students with SEN get together, she will make a big difference.*

As can be seen from the above, analysing the interviews of special education teachers revealed generally positive findings. It was generally felt that there were very positive effects from inclusion on both typically developing students and students with SEN, except some negative findings such as; learning inappropriate words and inappropriate behaviours. Special education teachers reported some efforts in terms of facilitating students' interactions and friendships, which has shown positive results and has benefitted typically developing students and students with SEN alike. Analysis of the interviews also showed that the wider community, and especially parents, have an impact up on how typically developing students and students with SEN interacted. It was also felt by the interviewees that various positive reinforcement strategies were helpful. Previous experience with individual with SEN, time and the availability of shared activities were all reported to be contributing to the enhancement of students'

positive interaction and helped in overcoming initial concerns of ‘difference’. Some interviewees were frustrated by the lack of support from other staff in this aspect and has reported the importance of the role played by head teachers in promoting inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. This will be further discussed in the discussion chapter.

6.6 Summary of Chapter

The aim of this chapter was to present and briefly discuss findings from the qualitative data analysis related to the obstacles to inclusion of students with SEN in KSA. In each theme, a number of subthemes were identified and reported responses from special education teachers interviewed and briefly discuss what these responses might indicate. The first theme introduced the overall culture of inclusion in schools and the extent to which there are indications of an inclusive culture in the schools. This theme was divided into six sub-themes and started by demonstrating the attitudes displayed by both general education teachers and head teachers towards inclusion as perceived by special education teachers. It highlights how, although sometimes the attitudes are positive, generally there is a lack of collaborative relationship between general education teachers and special education teachers. It shows that the responsibility of facilitating inclusion of students with SEN is mostly left to the special education teachers. It was highlighted how this may be based on factors such as not wanting an additional workload, a lack of special education qualifications and training and also the salary incentive afforded to special education teachers discouraging general education teachers. Following this, there is a discussion surrounding the availability of inclusive activities for students with SEN and how often their needs are not catered for fully and how the culture of separation is exists even in planning and conducting activities for general education and special education. Subsequently, the next section deals with the

language used to describe students with SEN in the school environment and how the use of discriminatory language becomes unconsciously the norm. Another indicator of the lack of inclusive culture was seen in how the physical environments of schools are lacking accessibility to facilitate students with SEN' movements around the school. Both budgetary reasons and a lack of administrative support were highlighted as the key factors underlying this.

The next theme elaborates on the provision of professional development and preparation of staff, as well as the access to specialist support. This included insufficient knowledge and training of general education teachers. It also discusses the limited in-service training opportunities for special education teachers and how this impacts their ability to deal with the challenges they face. This was then followed by the second sub-theme reporting on the lack of both specialist human support including special education supervisors from the LEA and the RSES to provide advice and guidance not only for special teachers but also for all other staff members. In addition, interviewees point out that there is a need for more availability of specialists such as speech therapists and that they should be based in mainstream schools instead of having to transferring the students to them outside the school.

Following that, there is a discussion surrounding parents of students with SEN involvement and collaboration with schools. In this theme, teachers reported that most of the parents of students with SEN are happy and positive towards the inclusion of their children in mainstream school. However, they reported that parents do not collaborate enough with teachers and are not involved in their children education. This was attributed by the teachers to a number of factors including the educational level of the parents, their expectations about their children's potential to learn, their expectations about themselves as being able to enhance their children's education.

Other factors included busy life style. The teachers in this aspect reported that parents are not being encouraged by schools and are not given a chance to be involved with the school. This was particularly clear in articulating the students IEP, in which parents have almost no voice and their participation is kept to minimum level which is signing the IEP after it is been finalised by the teacher.

Finally, the last theme was about the interaction of typically developing peers with and attitudes towards students with SEN. Overall positive finings reported by teachers in this theme as they reported that both students are interacting well together, accept each other and are making friendships. Interviewees generally felt that there were very positive effects from inclusion on both typically developing students and students with SEN. These benefits were categorised under three main headings: psychological, social, and academic benefits. This was attributed by teachers to a number of factors. These include having previous experience with individual with SEN, time factor and the availability of shared activities were all reported to be contributing to the enhancement of the positive interactions between both set of students.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS

7.1 Introduction

The main focus of this research is to investigate obstacles facing the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools in KSA, as perceived by special education teachers. As presented in the methodology chapter, both quantitative and qualitative data was obtained and analysed separately. Chapters Five and Six presented the findings of the research, along with a brief analysis. The overall findings of both questionnaires and interviews of this research, have yielded similar results, thus confirmed and complemented each other. This chapter aims to synthesize, merge, compare and interpret those findings, and to connect to the literature on the topic as presented in chapters Two and Three. Subsequently, how these findings can contribute to and expand upon the existing literature about the obstacles that currently exist regarding inclusion of students with SEN in KSA will be elaborated upon. Furthermore, this chapter will present possible explanations regarding why these obstacles exist. Ideas for future, potential studies will be suggested, as well as proposing possible and practical solutions that can be taken by the responsible parties, stakeholders and decision makers for the purpose of promoting the inclusion of students with SEN. Throughout this discussion, some references are made to teachers' responses without their direct quotes, however, their direct verbatim quotes are presented in chapter Six.

This chapter is organised according to the main themes of the research, which are: inclusive culture of mainstream school; professional development; parents' involvement; and typically developing peers' interactions with students with SEN. As mentioned previously, the models of disabilities were used as a framework. This is helpful in unravelling and interpreting the mechanisms underlying the participants' perceptions regarding obstacles that impede inclusion. This model underpins the key

areas of focus on inclusion that needs improving for its success in KSA. A consideration of the theoretical views surrounding this model creates avenues for more detailed insight into how students with SEN can be supported in inclusive educational settings. It is important to identify obstacles that limit their opportunity for being effectively included and therefore work towards overcoming them. In chapter Three, it was discussed how theoretical models are representative of the changing perceptions surrounding the educational provisions in place for students with SEN. Students with SEN have now more opportunities to immerse themselves in mainstream schools, hence they can benefit from the wide array of options available and consequently become more actively engaged with their environment (Ainscow et al., 2013).

7.2 Inclusive Culture of Mainstream School

Inclusive education should be imbedded in to the culture of the school and the whole supporting system, as represented by the layers in Starratt's Onion Model of school culture, presented in the review of the literature, chapter Three. School culture dictates the way schools' members practice inclusion in the school and whether inclusion is met with acceptance or with rejection. The former is usually being observed in schools with a 'shared sense of what is important, a shared ethos of caring and concern, and a shared commitment to helping students learn' (Peterson and Deal, 1998, p. 29) and where staff are actively seeking to promote a more inclusive environment.

Overall, findings of my research revealed that separation is perpetuated and a very clear 'us' and 'them' conceptualization is evident. Inertia towards a cultural shift within schools was identified in understanding and attitudes towards inclusion. There was resistance identified from both leadership, and general education teachers, and inclusive

activities were often hard to organise, if not frowned upon. Special education teachers reported that school head teachers and other staff lacked a comprehensive understanding of inclusion of student with SEN. For example, the majority of teachers agreed that, 'there is a lack of understanding of the concept of inclusion amongst school staff' (Questionnaire item 1, Appendix 4). This was explained by the interviews data that inclusion is perceived by the staff in their schools as locational only, as they are *"a special school inside a general school"* (T3. S. D) as well as inclusion being something that is the responsibility of special education teachers only. These expressions, according to the teachers interviewed, are indicators of how an understanding of inclusion is limited, where it is believed that educating students with SEN is not integral or necessary for a school; rather, it is something extra: *"an additional workload"* (T10. C. D).

This could be explained by the low level of awareness and knowledge about inclusion, its meaning, principles and its implementation on the part of the school staff. A view supported by Avramidis and Kalvya (2007) who argued that knowledge and awareness about inclusion is essential for school staff to have positive attitudes and to promote inclusive practices. This is also evidenced in this research where, for example, T4. S. D stated that, *"the school lacks the awareness although we [special education teachers] conducted several workshops and distributed different leaflets amongst all the school members*", and, *"the awareness and knowledge about inclusion and students' particular needs are very limited*" (T7. W. D), as well as, *"teachers and head teachers are not aware of inclusion and what students with SEN need*" (T6. E. D). These quotes highlight how there is a limited grasp of what inclusion means and how it can be successfully implemented. This may not necessarily indicate that inclusion is

misunderstood entirely; rather, the main issue seems to be how this limited understanding translates into practice where students are still separated.

At the local level, this finding might indicate that, overall, KSA inclusion policy is in agreement with the United Nation Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nation, 2006), which discusses how access to education is a right of every individual, as discussed in chapter Three. Nonetheless, the issue seems to lie in there being a lack of clear guidance about practical measures for implementing the inclusion of students with SEN at the school level. Both teachers and head teachers do not have the adequate level of awareness that would otherwise equip them to implement the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream settings, as reported by teachers in this research.

The Onion Model of school culture includes the layer of policies, which functions as the guidance for programmes and operations. This layer includes the rules that determine day-to-day decisions. It requires frequent monitoring, so that necessary modifications can be made to ensure that any changes that take place in the school are kept in line with the rules. In the Saudi context, inclusive policy does exist, which is known as Regulations of Special Education Programs and Institutes (RSEPI). However, this policy lacks a practical element describing how to implement inclusion. This can also be attributed to the fact that this KSA policy was put into place in 2001, which was long after many schools already had an established team of staff. Hence, existing teachers and head teachers lacked awareness of RSEPI, as well as the legal requirements for the inclusion policy to be implemented correctly. This is especially important because, although the RSEPI does not provide practical guidelines for the implementation of inclusion, it outlines important definitions for teachers, school administrators, other service providers and families of the education rights of students

with SEN. It includes: explanations of the concepts of disability, least restrictive environments, transition services, the role of multidisciplinary teams, IEPs, special education teachers, resource rooms, and other aspects (RSEPI, 2001). The knowledge of these essentials by teachers and head teachers is integral to the education of students with SEN in mainstream schools (Al-Quraini, 2011). This is furthermore highlighted by Murry and Al-Qahtani (2015), who argued that, not only are in-service teachers unaware of the legal requirements for the implementation of inclusion, but the majority lack sufficient knowledge regarding their exact responsibilities to students with SEN. Furthermore, their awareness on how to put into practice special education laws in schools was limited, hence Murry and Al-Qahtani (2015) also highlighted how they believed it was necessary to have further information on not only the concepts of inclusion but also the most effective means of implementation.

The success of schools that are aiming to increase levels of inclusivity is highly dependent upon the actions of those in leadership positions within the schools. The Onion Model of school culture asserts this notion in that the head teachers' role can be found in almost all of the Onion Model layers. For example, they are responsible for articulating the school purpose and vision, ensuring implementation of inclusive polices, ensuring inclusivity in the school operations and programmes as well as enhancing positive attitudes of the school members. This is central to successfully developing an inclusive school (Finnan, 2000; Hallinger and Heck, 2002). The majority of special education teachers in this research here, reported that their head teachers are not helpful in promoting inclusion and are not participating in promoting its implementation. For example, one of the interviewees reported, "neither the head teacher nor the other staff are supportive […] it's just our responsibility" (T10. C. D). Special education teachers perceived this as a major barrier to inclusion, as without

appropriate leadership support, inclusive education is unlikely to be effective. Not only did the participants in this research report that their leadership was not collaborating in the promotion of inclusion, one participant even went so far as to highlight how some inclusive activities were actively discouraged (T4. S. D). This discouragement of inclusion by school leadership is further confirmed by the majority's agreement with the questionnaire item that states, 'students with SEN are seen by school staff as individuals with lower levels of abilities and skills' (Questionnaire item 4 Appendix 4). In this regard, an overall impression has been gained that; some head teachers are still maintaining the point of view that reflects principles of the medical model of disability. This is where they perceive the special needs of the child as an illness that needs a treatment. As a result, they discourage the conducting of activities in which students with SEN can learn, interact and socialise with other students, as they believe that they are "without benefit" (T4. S. D) and just a disturbance to other students.

It was felt by a number of the teachers in this research, for example, T11. C, T2. N. D, and T4. S. D, that, the Ministry of Education should take responsibility for ensuring that staff in all schools are aware of both the meaning of inclusion and its practical implementation in a school environment. This can be achieved by providing schools' staff with sufficient training and actively working towards raising the awareness about inclusion and students with SEN. A suggestion supported by Carrington et al. (2010), who stated that the proficiencies of educational practitioners are correlated with the nature and efficacy of inclusive education. This will not only assist in raising the awareness of all members of the school about inclusion and students with SEN, but will also help in encouraging collaborative relationships between staff. This was reported as a major obstacle by the large majority of special education teachers in this research

Furthermore, findings of this research have revealed that across the board there was a consistent lack of collaboration from general education teachers. It was reported that general education teachers lacked the patience to deal with students with SEN and saw them as extra work. The level of collaboration within a school, Corbett (2002) argued, is illustrative of the school's culture. Increased levels of collaborative teamwork between general and special education teachers enables opportunities for teachers to learn from each other, as well as fostering acceptance of change and sharing the responsibility of including and educating all children. This will then be reflected in the overall inclusive culture of the schools as described in the Onion Model of school culture (Starratt, 2010). Based on this model, implementing inclusive education in the mainstream schools requires collaboration from everyone to make sure that the students' needs are met (see chapter Three).

A possible explanation of this lack of collaboration can be the view held by members of schools' staff, that, students with SEN are solely the responsibility of special education teachers. The resulting unwillingness to collaborate was the most frequently reported issue faced by the teachers. This view was reported in previous studies, where general education teachers felt that students with SEN were not their responsibility and which resulted in inclusion turning into exclusion through the practice of isolation inside the classroom (Tilstone and Rose, 2003). Again, this reflects a 'medical' point of view, similar to the view that only a doctor can assist a patient with a disease, in this case it is perceived that the student is the problem and can only be helped, by this logic, with special techniques and special knowledge provided by special education teachers, as they are the only educational professionals qualified to do so (Villa and Thousand, 2005).

Another explanation of the lack of collaboration worth highlighting is that of the perceived 'workload' of general education teachers combined with a pay gap jealousy. In the context of KSA, special education teachers are paid more than general education teachers. This was identified in the findings as a major deterrent for both the successful collaboration and implementation of inclusive education. This view corroborates the previous findings from Forlin and Chambers (2011) and Coskun, et al. (2009), who discussed how feelings of an increase in workload causes teachers to accommodate students with SEN to a lesser degree than they otherwise would have done. However, it could also be due to other factors that prevent general education teachers from collaboration, such as lack of training, the time and expertise in doing so (Santoli et al., 2008).

Special education teachers in this research cited the issue of a lack of training. They perceived this as an excuse used by general education teachers not to collaborate. For example, it was reported that when general education teachers are asked to collaborate, their reply by T9. C. D; "'*we neither study special education nor do we have training in it', is the pretext of general education teachers to not collaborate"*. This is valid for a number of reasons: firstly, because there is little evidence to suggest that general education teachers have adequate training, that will sufficiently prepare them for the undertaking and practicing of inclusive practices; hence this could well be a key underlying factor in their resistance to collaboration (Winter, 2006; Stella et al., 2007; Avramidis and Kalyva 2007; Woodcock, 2013; Bornman and Donohue, 2013). Secondly, special education teachers themselves confirmed this fact in this research and they agreed there is insufficient training provided, either for themselves or for general education teachers. Hence the assertion that this is simply used as an 'excuse' is symptomatic of special education teachers feeling upset that they are left alone in

mainstream schools. So that, even though they are required to collaborate, this collaboration is not reciprocated on the part of most of the general education teachers. Although this might not be the case for all genera teachers in KSA, however, the participants in this research reported that there are an underlying patterns of a lack of collaborative relationships between both general education teachers and special education teachers evident in the schools involved in this research. Given the importance of training, this will be discussed separately under the aspect of professional development in section 7.3.

The lack of training is furthermore exacerbated by an absence of, or the ambiguity in, policy. Collaborative team working in inclusive practice inside the school environment is encouraged and emphasized in Saudi policy (Ministry of Education, 2002). Nonetheless, higher-level policies and decisions from the Ministry of Education are vague, insofar as they specify that collaboration is mandatory, the guidelines for exactly how to do this are limited. For successful collaboration to occur, as suggested by Kilanowski-Press et al. (2010), steps should be outlined for schools that will act as a guide for teachers. Findings from this research suggest that this is not the case. For example, one interviewee reported, *"there should be an establishment of rules and procedures for collaboration so that all parties are clear of their responsibility, and so it is not just left to individual efforts"* (T4. S. D). Based on previous studies (Kilanowski-Press et al., 2010) and findings from this research, it can be concluded that a contextually and locally appropriate means to overcome this barrier is achieved by establishing rules and guidelines for teachers. Thus, procedures will be more systematic and less up to the individual efforts. This will help schools to establish a culture of collaboration and shared responsibility of best practice regarding what works for

students with SEN and what does not, which will therefore help in the adoption of a greater commitment to promoting inclusive practices.

The lack of collaboration between general and special education teachers is, as argued by Robinson and Buly (2007), due to the traditional separation of both teachers' roles in education, whereby general and special education teachers perceive education from a slightly different angle, as well as being practiced separately. This is particularly apparent in the context of KSA, where inclusion is still in its early stages and both sets of teachers are unaccustomed to working together and have not been trained to do so (Al-Nahdi, 2014). This poses a challenge for both special and general education teachers in setting goals, evaluating students' progress, planning the classes, making decisions and solving problems, which used to be made individually.

Following Kluths', (2010) argument that, teachers need to start thinking about the class as "our class", rather than "my class", the findings of this research showed that this is not the case in terms of the language used when talking about inclusion and students with SEN. For example, concepts such as the use of terms like "our students" to indicate students with SEN and "their students" to indicate typically developing peers, by most of the interviewees in this research. Other terms noticed in the interviewees' speech were those of *"mental students"* (T5. E. D), *"mental classes"* (T7. W. D) and *"mental section"* (T11. C. D). These terms are not only used in teachers' speech, but also reported to be *"even the sign of the school entrance has this name [mental sections] on it"* (T11. C. D).

An explanation of this is that, using such terms might be perceived as the norm rather than being understood as discriminative language. This was clear from the view of one of the participants, where she answered, after being asked as to why are you using such

terms, and whether or not, you think they are discriminative or labelling terms? that: *"this has become the known name of students with disabilities"* (T11. C. D). In fact, if it remains the norm then it is in itself discriminatory as the use of this language is unconsciously discriminating against those with SEN and it marks them out as different which is anti-inclusion. This, in fact indicates that, inclusion in KSA has not been thought of beyond the physical presence of students with SEN in mainstreams schools. Even though the students with SEN are included in mainstream schools and may have the same or as good set facilities as their typically developing peers, they remain, to some extent, discriminated against by the use of this language. The use of such language has been argued to be damaging to inclusion (Booth, 2000; Thomas and Loxley, 2001; Ballard, 2003; Kleinhenz, 2007). This is because language does not only reflect the culture of the school but it also shapes it, therefore using this language neutralises its usage to become the 'norm'. This, however, reflect the medical model of disability, which puts the focus on the individual's medical status and views students with SEN as medically impaired persons who require treatment (Villa and Thousand, 2005).

In fact, since these terms are not only used in everyday practices, but are also written "*in the school entrance sign"* (T11. C. D), this means they are also officially used at a higher, administrative level, such as the supervisors in the LEAs and the Ministry of Education, as schools' signs cannot be used without being approved and licensed by the Ministry of Education. Back to the Onion Model of school culture, language is present in different layers of the Onion Model, for example, activities, programmes and the policy of the school. Therefore, for any change in behaviour towards students with SEN to accrue, there will need to be different ways of thinking about disability as well as ways of provision of special services. These will then offer the means for transforming practice, which follows from the language used in discussing aspects of

inclusion. This could begin from the point of the official written policies and end with day-to-day practices in schools, for example, using terms, such as, 'students with learning disability' instead of 'mental student', as is used in the UK, for example. Although both terms still maintain students' differences, the former seems less inhibiting of the success of the inclusion (Booth, 2000; Thomas and Loxley, 2001; Ballard, 2003) and to the students' sense of belonging and their well-being.

In the same way language reflects the school culture, the physical environment can be seen to indicate school culture. From the findings of this research, one of the frequently reported obstacles was the issue of the school's layout. The majority of teachers emphasised how poor layout impacts upon both the level of accessibility and the facilities in place to enhance inclusion of students with SEN. For example, *"the school's environment is not prepared. It is very old and too small"* (T9. C. D), *"the playground is not helpful as it is not prepared at all"* (T6. E. D), and "… *the school's entrance has no ramp"* (T11. C. D).

According to the Onion Model, the physical environment of the school, including the images and the layout of the school, are determinants of the school culture. Corbett, (2002) argued that the general atmosphere of the building, what is visible and valued, and where images and artefacts are placed, are reflective of school's inclusive culture. A culture is not only a way of thinking but also a way of providing (Angelides and Ainscow, 2000). Having an assessable entrance at the back of the school rather than having all the students able to enter together at the front, as reported in this research, is not inclusive. This is because it still reflects discrimination in that, typically developing individuals come from the front door and those with physical disabilities come from the back door. This is to say, whilst services are provided but the way in which they are provide is discriminatory. This is supported by the UNESCO (2003), which states that,

in many contexts, the way education provision is arranged contributes to labelling and discrimination despite good intentions. In addition, the findings of this research are consistent with those of Hemmingson and Borell (2002), who found that a lack of automatic door openers, ramps, elevators, suitable desks, chairs, and assistive devices, causes additional stress for students that could otherwise impact upon their ability to perform well in other areas of learning.

A possible explanation for this might be that most of the mainstream schools in KSA were built prior to inclusion being implemented. Also, they were designed without students with SEN in mind. Hence, they did not consider the particular needs of students with SEN, such as the accessibility of entrances and exits, lifts, a prepared playground, and so on. In this regard, Al-Mousa (2010) discussed how the KSA is currently concerned about matter of accessibly, and is working on establishing a nationwide project to overcome this obstacle. The project has been developed by the Prince Salman Centre for Disability Research and it has been named "Universal Accessibility" (Prince Salman Centre for Disability Research, 2010, p.3). A study was undertaken by the centre in 2007 for the purpose of identifying firstly, the universal accessibility that currently exists in KSA, and then aligning this with international practices focused on four key areas: these are: *"built environment, land transportation, marine transportation and destination and accommodation,"* (Prince Salman Centre for Disability Research, 2007, p.9). In 2008, the Universal Accessibility Built Environment Guidelines Manual (UABE) was created (Prince Salman Centre for Disability Research, 2010). Its target audience was mainly legislators, ministers, architects, engineers, urban planners and generally all those who had a role in constructing the infrastructure and environment for individuals with disabilities (Prince Salman Centre for Disability Research, 2010). The aim of this document is that:

> *All people in KSA can fully participate and live independently in society, with access to public and private spaces for the purpose of education, employment, health, leisure and all other needs of daily living. To achieve this vision, the Kingdom is embracing the evolving philosophy of universal accessibility, which promotes the concept of designing for all people* (Prince Salman Centre for Disability Research, p, 10).

Such a project is promising in that action will be taken in regard to the physical environment in order to facilitate and enhance inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools in KSA. This movement towards adapting the physical environment to enhance inclusion of individual with disabilities in the society in KSA reflects a movement from the medical model to one, which is a more social model (Smith et al., 2004). It is hoped that, therefore, as a result of this UABE, measures will be taken regarding the revamping of layout and accessibility in schools and making it truly inclusive, not just accessible.

7.3 The Provision of Professional Development for Staff

A growing body of evidence is accumulating to suggest that pre-service and in-service training lies at the centre of effective inclusive education programs (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002; Kristensen et al., 2003; Reid, 2005; Winter, 2006; Kennedy and Shiel, 2010). A representative view in this respect is outlined by Carrington et al. (2010), who has stated that the perceptions, beliefs, and proficiencies of educational practitioners' correlate with the nature and efficacy of inclusive education. The findings of this research showed that a lack of training and specialist support are both major obstacles facing teachers in schools, where more than half of teachers agreed that, 'there is a lack of training that help teachers to acquire new and different ways of teaching students with SEN' (Questionnaire item 7, Appendix 4). The majority of teachers interviewed in this research also highlighted that there is insufficient training currently being offered

in-service for both general and special education teachers who are working with students with SEN. This finding builds on Al-Turkee (2005), who discussed how training courses for practitioners are not sufficiently provided to implement inclusive education. This is also supported by Al-Fahily (2009) in highlighting how the Ministry of Education do not place enough priority and consideration on training courses tailored to school staff. Based on the findings of this research and the previous studies (Al-Fahily, 2009; Al-Turkee, 2005).

A possible explanation of this finding is that, since special education teachers have already received pre-service training as part of their undergraduate degree, this is perceived as sufficient and therefore teachers do not need in-service training. Special education teachers in this research confirmed this. They themselves reported a need for in-service training, for example:

> *[…] special education teachers, even if they have a special education qualification, they still need in-service training because the theory is far different from the real practice which I faced when I was first employed here"* (T7. E. D).

This finding confirms Winter's, (2006) argument that pre-service training is only the first step in a successful professional. This was also reported in a later Serbian study by Macura Milovanović and Peček (2012), where they discussed how teachers are struggling to fulfil the students' diverse array of needs. Teachers stated that training they have previously taken is far from what must be done in practice, which highlights the gap existing between theory and practice in teachers' preparation programs. Further, Saravanabhavan and Saravanabhavan, (2010) reported that sometimes special education teachers were less knowledgeable than general education teachers and that special education teachers did not always receive enough training in college, where

sometimes they knew less than general education teachers who had attended professional development and training.

In addition, some teachers in my research mentioned that, it could have been very useful if their pre-service training was longer and more practically oriented, and they suggested that this should be done for future teachers (T3. S. D), (T6. E. D), (T2. N. D). Similar suggestions were reported in a study by Ergul et al., (2013), in Turkey, where teachers requested providing in-service training, improving undergraduate special education programs and extending the duration of the practical phase of the programme by spreading it over the whole duration of the program, and making the courses more field-oriented. Thus, the need for long, extensive and practically oriented training courses pre and in services is apparent. Based on the previous studies (Saravanabhavan and Saravanabhavan, 2010; Elshabrawy and Hassanein, 2015; Macura Milovanović and Peček, 2012; Ergul et al., (2013), and findings from this research, it can be suggested that a contextually and locally appropriate means to overcome this issue is that both college administrators and faculty members should place more emphasis on adequately preparing future teachers for teaching students with SEN in mainstream schools and classrooms.

Another noticeable finding in this research was that, some special education teachers reported they have tried to undertake training for other members of school staff, for example; *"we as special education teachers tried to conduct training workshops for general education teachers"* (T5. E. D). However, the problem, they face is that, this training is not perceived important by other member of school staff and therefore they do not attend. Special education teachers think that, *"[…] they don't want to feel that*

special education teachers are more knowledgeable than them, especially if the special education teachers have less teaching experience than the general education teacher" (T6. E. D). Ainscow et al., (2013) argued that some cultural factors could be negatively impacting upon the participation of staff members. Hierarchy as a cultural factor in the context of KSA, has a clear impact upon how a newly qualified special teacher will be perceived as having less credibility than a supervisor who is in a higher position and will thus garner less authority and respect. This view is also evidenced in this research where one of the interviewed teachers stated; *"[…] honestly, normally if training is not from the LEA, then it is perceived less important and therefore they do not attend"* (T5. E. D). Arguably, the issue of hierarchy as cultural factor in the context of KSA can be minimised through establishing a shared learning community, which is a suggestion made by one of the interviewed teachers in this research (T3. W. D). Learning communities are argued by Watson (2014) to be important for teachers to collaborate and share their ideas and expertise on the best means to achieve a productive and inclusive environment. Watson, emphasised that Professional Learning Communities are a vital resource that should be put into place. Not only will this resource enable teachers to discuss ideas amongst themselves, but it could also be a platform within which they can share presentations, seminars, and learning experiences that are tailored specifically for the educating of individuals regarding interacting with and best serving the needs of students with SEN (Watson, 2014). Most of these areas were also heighted in this research (T3. W. D).

The lack of training reported by teachers in this research was combined with a need for specialist human resources specially a residential special education supervisor (RSES) in school to whom teachers can refer to for guidance and to compensate the lack of

training, for example: *"we have no residential special educational supervisor in our school who we can refer to whenever we need to"* (T9. C. D). The role of RSES in the context of KSA is similar to the role of the SEN Coordinator (SENCO) in the UK, as mentioned previously in chapter Three. The need for such human resources in every school has been recognized along with the importance of their role in enhancing inclusion (Cheminais, 2005). Teachers expression of need for training and specialist human resources to support them and guide them to better include the students with SEN in mainstream schools reflect an awareness of what inclusion needs that the obstacles to inclusion are not within the child but within the surrounding environment including the lack of preparedness and proficiency to effectively include the students with SEN. This reflects a more social model point of view, which attributes the problem to the society and environment rather than the child (Frederickson and Cline, 2015).

Not only did the teachers in this research report the need for RSES in schools, but they also expressed insufficient support from special education supervisors from the LEAs, mentioning limited visits to the schools as detailed in the two previous chapters (Six and Seven). An explanation of how teachers in this research considered the lack of those human resource could be the low number of supervisors compared to the demand for supervision as a result of the increasing number of schools that are implementing inclusion programs. This is combined by the rapid expansion of the school age population, which has been too large and growing too fast for the education system to match (Al- Mousa, 2010; Gaad, 2011). This in fact could explain the extra responsibility given to the RSESs of schools other than their own, as reported in this research. This tackles the issue insofar as it helps to cover the high demand for supervision, as stated previously. It could also reduce the blame that teachers place on

the LEAs for the insufficient communication and collaboration that they have with inclusive schools in relation to the schools' needs, as reported in this research.

Teachers in this research reported that if every inclusive school had a RSES it would help in solving the problem of insufficient follow up and supervision for schools that are located in rural areas or those at a far distance from the LEAs. This point is supported by Norwich and Gray (2007) who argued that location is a key contributing factor in accessibility to appropriate special services and provision. This was an issue raised by one of the interviewed teachers when she compared the level of supervisor visits in two schools in which she worked. One was physically right next to the LEA and in which the special supervisor regularly visited, monitored and supervised the educational process of students with SEN. In contrast, the other school was more than an hour away from the LEA and the supervisor visited only twice in the whole year – this was deemed to be insufficient. Based on the findings of this research and the argument of Norwich and Gray (2007), the issue of equal distribution of supervisors in schools, both centrally and rurally located, is important point to be taken into consideration by the Ministry of Education. Further discussion of this issue is presented in section 7.6 in this chapter.

A significant element of professional development is the availability of professionals such as physiotherapists, speech therapists and psychologists to provide assistance in the schools (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003). Access to this support is not only beneficial for teachers, but also facilitates students' progress and ultimately enhances their inclusion (Koutrouba et al., 2008; Avramidis and Kalyva, 2007). In this research, more than half of the teachers reported limited availability of those professionals in

their schools. This formed a hindering obstacle as they agreed that, 'the school lacks a multi-disciplinary team, including psychologists, physiotherapist, speech and language therapists' (Questionnaire item 12, Appendix 4). A possible explanation of this lack could be that the number of professionals specialising in these specific areas do so in the health sector rather than in the educational sector (Sesalem, 2002). This explanation is supported by one of the interviewees responses where she stated that due to the lack of a speech therapist in the school, the parents of one of the student with SEN took the child out of the school to a dedicated speech and language centre, rather than keep the student in school instead of providing the speech therapist in the school. A practice that the teacher was not happy about (T6. E. D). The availability of such professionals is of high importance as they play an important role in supporting the students, as well as the teachers, by accomplishing their roles. Al-Abdulgabar and Massud (2002), confirm this: teachers who did have access to experts were found to accomplish more as this meant they had better support. For instance, through additional human resources, such as professionals and teaching assistants, a wider range of equipment and other educational resources and more accessible opportunities for training and professional development, teachers were able to thrive.

7.4 The Involvement and Collaboration of Parents of Students with SEN with the School

The research findings in this aspect reported that more than half of the teachers (55%) agreed that, 'parents of students with SEN appear to accept including their children in mainstream schools and are happy with it' (Questionnaire item 13, Appendix 4). This was further supported by the majority of special education teachers interviewed in different districts, who reported that parents of students with SEN in their schools are

positive towards including their children in mainstream schools, rather than sending them to special schools. However, the majority of teachers reported that parents of students with SEN are not collaborating enough with teachers and they considered this lack of collaboration and involvement with schools as an obstacle that they encounter. A positive explanation of this finding could be that parents prefer sending their children to mainstream schools as they like for them to be included and have the opportunity to interact with typically developing peers. Hence, if they are positive and happy about including their children in mainstream schools, their subsequent behavior should illustrate this as the assumption that they would be involved with and actively collaborate with the schools. However, based on this research's findings, this was not the case.

Investigating possible explanations for this limited parental involvement in this research revealed a number of factors. The majority of participants in this research similarly highlighted the parents' educational level as a contributing factor in the insufficient level of parental involvement. For example: *"we have uneducated parents, who cannot really realise the need of their child to attend school, let alone communicate actively with the school"* (T2. N. D), and: *"the educational level of parents plays a very important role"* (T6. E. D), and that *"their involvement really depends on the educational level"* (T3. S. D). Whilst it is true that the parents' level of education plays a vital role in the level of their involvement in the child's education and can be a contributing factor, as reported in previous studies, i.e. Leyser and Kirk, (2004), Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005), Al-Kahtani, (2012), Al-Dosari and Pufpaff, (2014), this belief can be problematic and should be challenged. It assumes that a lack of education correlates with lack of concern for a child, and so it does not consider the contributions

a parent may have made for their child's welfare regardless. Even though they may lack education, parents may have otherwise trained their children and be more attuned to their emotional responses (Cooper et al., 2010). Al-Rayes, (2005) further argued that communication between schools and parents would be better enhanced if schools did not automatically assume that parents' level of education is a hindrance to collaboration, as those parents can be trained and made to understand how to contribute to the success of their child.

From the findings of this research and previous studies Cooper et al. (2010) and Al-Rayes (2005), it can be suggested that one way of overcoming this barrier could be by establishing family literacy programmes to educate parents. This was an issue also raised by one of the interviewed teachers to be the responsibility of Ministry of Education and the LEAs, where she stated: *"we can't educate parents, the Ministry of Education and the LEA should and are responsible for establishing literacy programs for them"* (T5. E. D). This, in fact, is particularly important in the context of KSA where there are no family learning programs, or Parent Teacher Associations, or parent school governors being established (Al-Khateeb, 2001). A need for family literacy programmes for parents was one of the main issues mentioned by teachers in this research, for example; "*the Ministry of Education - or at least the LEA - should educate parents and establish parents' organisations to which parents could go, learn and exchange knowledge and experience*" (T9. C. D). Similar need has also been identified in various Arab neighborhood countries and they have taken tangible moves toward the enhancement of parental participation. For example, in Oman, parents' literacy programmes and school inspections that push for parental involvement have been

established and have proven to be effective, a similar move has been made in Jorden (Al-Hilawani et al., 2008; Sumaiti, 2012).

Parents' low expectations about their children's ability to perform and learn could be one reason, as evidenced in many previous research studies, e.g., Redd et al. (2004), Fan (2001), Jeynes (2005) and Jeynes (2007). Consistent with the literature, teachers in this research reported that parents have low expectations surrounding their child's ability to gain knowledge and therefore do not think their involvement would make any difference, for example one of the teachers reported that:

> *One parent was invited to the school as her daughter never did her homework. She said I don't think she will be able to do the homework but as long as she goes and talks to some friends and has fun that is enough"* (T4. S. D).

However, a new explanation could be that the problem might not only be the low expectations but rather the occasions for which parents are mostly invited in the school. The teacher's response when stating, *"her daughter never did the homework*" (T4. S. D), seem to indicate that the mother was asked about her daughter's failure to do homework. Whilst it is important to question why the students are not doing what they are asked to do at home for the purpose of monitoring and ensuring that the students are followed up at home, students' failure should not be the first thing to talk about when making contact with parents. This explanation builds on the argument of Aguilar (2015), that, it is important that, parents are invited and informed about their child's achievements and progress before their failure or inability to perform and encourage them to work on that at home further. Parents need to celebrate every single achievement that their child makes in order to feel confident and encouraged to do more and be involved more (Darch et al., 2004).

The school culture as argued by Cartledge and Kourea, (2008) has the power to either encourage or discourage parental involvement. Welcoming school culture that actively includes and engages parents helps to bolster relationships, as the more parents feel welcomed, the more likely they are to be involved with the school (Cartledge and Kourea, 2008). In this research, whilst teachers think parents are not collaborating enough, they themselves did not report that they have put sufficient effort in to achieving that. Therefore, the question here is whether the schools actually offer opportunities to involve parents and what kinds of participation activities are offered to the parents. For example, although teachers reported a high percentage of agreement with the questionnaire statement that, 'there are a variety of occasions in which parents of students with SEN can discuss the progress of and concerns about their children' (Questionnaire item 17, Appendix 4), these activities are limited to only parents' meeting or annual school's ceremony, as reported by most of the interviewed teachers. None of the teachers reported any other activities that encourage the parents to get involved in their children's learning, or any activities that are targeting parents' education, such as workshops that give parents practical ideas to do with their children at home.

This seems to be worsened by the fact that there are no participation opportunities reported by teachers to get parents involved, even when it comes to developing the students' IEPs, which is the prevalent view among most of the interviewed participants. Rather, this seemed to be unquestionably the responsibility of special education teachers only, as reported by those teachers, for example: "… *it's only me as a special education teacher who forms the students IEP*" (T8. W. D). This indicates a minimum

level of effort put in by the schools to encourage parental involvement, but rather parents' involvement is kept at a surface level and perceived by teachers to be limited to a more guardianship role, where: *"they do sign paperwork sent to them by the school and give consent for their child's participation in various activities*" (T8. W. D).

This in fact explains the high percentage of teachers' agreement with the questionnaire statement that, 'parents of students with SEN are not keen on asking teachers about what they can do to support their children's learning at home' (Questionnaire item 16, Appendix 4). This is to mean that they are not asking the teacher about what they can do to support their children's learning at home because they have limited opportunities given to them to do so. A contextually based explanation of this is the fact that in KSA schools and families are perceived as two separate agencies in which both roles of teachers and parents are perceived distinct. Teachers are teachers and parents are parents and rarely both roles interact (Al-Sheikh, 2007). Mostly the only time in which both roles interact is when a parent is also a teacher in the same school, as reported in by one of the interviewees in this research. Thus, without encouragement and invitation from the school, parents are less likely to collaborate and get involved with the school (Mittler, 2012).

Other factors that teachers in this research reported to contribute to limiting parents' collaboration with school and their own involvement in their children's education included lack of transportation (T4. S. D), having more children with whom the mother has to stay (T3. S. D), and work and busy life style (T5. E. D). Similar obstacles to parents' involvement were reported in a research by Al-Khateeb, 2001) in Jordan, which is a culturally similar country to KSA. Al-Khateeb (2001) discusses how these

obstacles were successfully overcome in Jorden. Her study outlines the different factors that have contributed to overcoming these obstacles. These include: a) the creation of courses aimed at training staff members on how to effectively communicate with parents, and hence encourage parents to also communicate; b) helping parents with transportation, such as free shuttles or buses to pick them up from their houses to the school, so that they can attend seminars and meetings in the school, which is an area suggested by one of the teachers in my research (T4. S. D); c) working around parents' schedules so that they can get feedback about their children; d) encouraging parents to be more pro-active and to also address their needs and give feedback in meetings, which is another area similarly highlighted in this research (T7. W. D). Taking into consideration both the findings of this research and the findings of previous research in a similar context (Al-Kahtteeb, 2001), it can be suggested that, drawing on the successful experiences of other countries that are close in culture to KSA, such as Jordan, is an effective strategy upon which to achieve better parental involvement. This is because collaborative efforts made between staff members and parents of students with SEN enhances the development of inclusive education (Villa et al., 2016), and is considered as one of the most important contributory variables in successful inclusion of students with SEN (Singal, 2005; Hilton and Henderson, 1993). Moreover, parents are able to facilitate social changes, particularly in education, as well as gauging the success of inclusion, so their reactions are critical in ascertaining the social validity of inclusion (Chmiliar, 2009). Similarly, teachers in this research reported that, if the relationships between the school and family is further enhanced, the quality of inclusion will be enhanced (T6. E. D) and (T1. N. D). This is also supported by the UNESCO (2003), which argued that for the needs of the students to be effectively met their parents should be actively involved.

Within the aspect of parents' involvement, although KSA educational policy strongly reinforces parental involvement, and that the development of parent-teacher relationships is a step that is mutually valuable. However, an overall impression that has been gained from the findings of this research is that, parent-teacher relationships has not happened as descripted and emphasised on the Saudi policy. For example, Saudi RSEPI asserts the importance of increasing parental participation in the education of their children, particularly in the child's IEP, and clearly states their right to be a member of the multidisciplinary team in formulating the child's IEP (Al-Kahtani, 2015). In addition, section, 76/2 (2001) of the RSEPI, contains the following suggestions: a) parent-teacher interaction is key to successful inclusion for students with SEN, b) the responsibility of keeping parents informed regarding visiting times for schools and activities conducted for their child is that of the head teachers c) parents should be regularly made aware of their child's needs and how they can be actively involved in the education process to facilitate meeting the child's need and achieving their potential and d) special education programs, activities, awareness workshops and seminars should be promoted for parents via leaflets or direct invitations by schools. However, findings from this research here showed that schools have not achieved the required level of involvement of parents as emphasised and described in the policy. This does not mean that collaboration between parents and teachers does not exist at all as reported in this research, but rather that the sufficiency and quality is lacking as parents' role is kept by schools on a surface level. One example is that, most of the teachers reported that parents are rarely ever invited to join in articulating their children's IEPs. In this regard, it was admitted that not involving the parents in forming

their children's IEP: *"[…] is a joint fault, we neither give them a chance because we get used to making it alone, nor they ever asked about it"* (T7. W. D).

Given that, parent-teacher relationship has been strongly reinforced as a mutually valuable step in enhancing inclusion of students with SEN, the practice should match the ideology and policies that already exist in KSA and should be more stringently adhered to if inclusion is to be successful. The question here is, therefore, why such policy seems not to be implemented sufficiently in KSA mainstream schools. One possible explanation for this might be that teachers unaware of this policy and the legal requirements for the implementation of inclusion, and they lack sufficient knowledge regarding their exact responsibilities to involve parents as highlighted by Murry and AL-Qahtani, (2015). However, it is also worth considering that it could be the result of teachers' closer adherence to school rather than national education policies. This second point is especially compelling when considering the fact that the policies established by each school are directly aligned with its own needs, its students' abilities, and the attitudes of its staff. Based on this group of considerations, Aldabas (2015) pointed out that teachers are more likely to comply with the policies of their schools than introduced by state agencies such as the Saudi Ministry of Education. Based on the findings of this research and the previous studies, it can be suggested that a contextually and locally appropriate means to overcome this barrier is by LEAs and schools' administrations to ensure implementing the policy and ensure that schools are activating the role of parents and encouraging their involvement.

7.5 Typically Developing Peers' Interaction with Students with SEN

Peers, as social agents, are responsible for the creation of a favourable social environment, in which one of the key factors is a positive and receptive attitude (Reina and Alvaro-Ruiz, 2016). As stated in the previous two chapters, the participants were overall positive regarding the aspect of typically developing peers' interactions with students with SEN in mainstream schools. This can be explained by the argument presented by the Centre of Studies in Inclusive Education (2008) that, inclusion is the form of education that allows the development of respect, understanding and friendships between typically developing students and their peers with SEN. This is because they meet and interact daily and thus learning about each other is an integral part of their education for life.

The attitudes and behaviour of families of typically developing children and how that might influence their children's perceptions and therefore behaviours, either positively or negatively, was one of the main factors reported by the participants in this research; *"parents are very important in building positive attitudes in their children"* (T8. W. D). This finding is consistent with previous research by Soodak and Erwin (2001) who argued that parents' have a real power in shaping their children's attitudes towards individual with SEN, which are vital for the ultimate success of inclusion. Other teachers in this research believe that the acceptance and the positive interaction between typically developing peers and students with SEN is just a matter of time. It is a promising finding that some students are interacting positively together and consequently accept each other over time. However, leaving the students to struggle for a long time to adapt to their peers with SEN could affect negatively the wellbeing of all of the students (Al-Khashrami, 2002; Bin Jomaʼah, 2010).

Based on the findings of this research and previous studies, therefore, a potential means of enhancing the students' positive interactions and acceptance is for schools to establish early intervention strategies to increase the students' awareness of their friends with SEN. For example, through an induction week set up prior to the main starting date of the school term. This can be followed by fun activities at the beginning of the school term, in which both groups of students are introduced to each other and to get them interacting through a variety of activities, both formal and informal, with praise given for being considerate to each other, as a positive reinforcement of the desired behaviour. This approach might help at least to shorten the time that students might take to get used to and accept their peers with SEN, as well as in reducing their fear as reported in this research.

In addition, another factor reported is that some students are positive and are interacting with their peers with SEN more easily because of previous experience or contact with individual with disabilities. This finding corresponds with other previous studies such as McDougall et al. (2004), who discussed how students who have had previously a direct contact with an individual with SEN, either through their family or a friend, were better able to communicate with them. In such a case, the teacher could take advantage of this situation when attempting to get students working together. For example, a peer tutoring strategy or group activities could be used, in which both typically developing students and students with SEN work together and in which such a student could facilitate interaction between the group members (Garrote, 2017).

Positive interactions between typically developing students and students with SEN, as argued by Walker, (2008) requires a supportive environment that encourages meaningful participation of students with SEN's through social interaction with other

typically developing students is important to develop them emotionally and socially. The findings of both questionnaire and the interviews with the teachers in this research, teachers reported better efforts made to encourage this positive relationship between students, compared to the previous aspect. For example, in the interviews the teachers reported that they conducted a number of activities that encouraged interaction between both students, such as Friends of Students with SEN Club (T9. C. D), positive and imaginative strategies, such as using a reinforcement board to enhance the students' interaction (T8. W. D) and (T1. N. D).

According to Mitchell (2014), the role of the teacher is extremely vital to the development of the students as they should be able to create a conducive, comfortable, educative and challenging atmosphere for these students both for the purpose of learning and socialization. The findings of this research confirm those of Mitchell (2014) in that participating teachers in this research reflected an awareness of the importance of their role and believed that the efforts they make to encourage students' positive interaction is an important factor that facilitates the students' interactions and acceptance as they have shown noticeable result, for example: *"I think this initiative was 99% successful in building and encouraging friendship and collaboration between students and of course acceptance* (T9. C. D).

The reinforcement and rewarding of positive behaviours in students are useful means of creating a productive school environment, where it motivates students to participate in positive actions toward their SEN peers. In particular, this is effective because if students intrinsically connect positive action with a good feeling, they will be more likely to repeatedly exhibit positive behaviours (Pierangelo and Giuliani, 2008).

Typically developing peers' interaction with students with SEN broadens the horizons of typically developing students and equips them in other areas of learning, such as communication skills and respecting differences. Through collaboration and communication with students with SEN they are able to experience things and use skills that they may not otherwise practise. This was evidenced in the comments of several participants about inclusion and the interactions between students. For example, *"both typically developing peers and students with SEN are benefiting from inclusion*" (T9. C. D).

Bruce and Hansson (2011), argued that positive social interactions among students are essential for the students' cognitive, social, and language development. The findings of this research further confirmed the argument of Bruce and Hansson (2011), where teachers also saw the opportunity for social interaction as a part of inclusion as fundamental in improving the speech of students with SEN (T9. C. D) and (T1. N. D), improving their self-esteem and self-confidence (T7. W. D) as well as learning through the modelling of appropriate behaviours (T9. C. D). Such positive behaviours that the students acquired are important and, therefore, should be maintained and encouraged. This is because most of positive social behaviours are of limited use unless they can be shown to generalise to appropriate situations (Pierangelo and Giuliani, 2008).

According to the social model, the removal of barriers to inclusivity requires a change of approach and thinking in the way in which these barriers can be removed (Smith et al., 2004). Therefore, enhancing such positive behaviours and encouraging its generalisation will help in promoting not only inclusive school but also inclusive society. Teachers might do so through using generalisation of positive behaviour by

which teachers need to train students to transfer their positive behaviour not only within the school context but also outside the school context. Teachers might ask parents to help in monitoring the students' generalisation outside the school context by acknowledging positive behaviours of their children, so that they too help in maintaining these behaviours (Pierangelo and Giuliani, 2008).

One obstacle reported by most of teachers in this aspect was the lack of support and collaboration from both general education teachers and head teachers when conducting or planning activities that encourage interaction between both groups of students. For example, one of the teachers reported: *"general education teachers do not help in getting the students interact and if activities to be conduct then it is special education teachers' responsibilities only*" (T5. E. D). In this regard, it was seen by teachers in this research, that the positive interactions reported, are more likely to be enhanced if general education teachers as well as schools' head teachers activate their roles and facilitate positive peers' interactions. This was earlier reflected by a number of previous studies that confirmed the fact that, staff plays a vital role in facilitating and encouraging positive interactions and relationships between students (Mitchell, 2014; Harper et al., 2008; Maras and Brown, 2000), and that, this relationship is very likely to be further enhanced and better results can be achieved if different parties of schools collaborate in planning and conducting activities for both groups of students (McLeskey, 2014).

Based on the finding of this research and the previously mentioned studies, it can be suggested that, the positive interactions reported by special education teaches are more likely to be enhanced if general education teachers as well as schools' head teachers activate their roles and facilitate positive peers' interactions, thus encouraging both groups of students to understand and accept one another. Through this, a better and

more inclusive school culture may be created. A potential means of encouraging schools' staff to work collaboratively in enhancing students' positive interactions is by the LEAs to establish inclusive evaluative criteria for schools, one of which is the extent to which schools' staff collaborate and participate in planning and conducting activities, encouraging positive interactions of students, as well as working towards enhancing acceptance of all students (UNESCO, 2005). Having discussed the overall obstacles reported in all districts of KSA, the following section focuses on discussing the differences found between the Central District and all the other districts in terms of posing higher level of obstacles that hinder effective inclusion of students with SEN, as well as possible explanations for this finding.

7.6 Differences between Teachers' Responses based on the Geographical District

As presented in chapter Five, significant differences between districts of KSA were found in two aspects of the research. These aspects are the inclusive culture of the school and the staff professional development. It was identified that there were distinct differences between the Central District and all other districts, insofar as most of the obstacles in both aforementioned areas were more prevalent in the Central District. The qualitative findings of this research also confirms this differences. As shown in the previous chapters, although obstacles were reported in all the districts, they were particularly clear in the central.

The statistically significant differences between districts of KSA found in this research is supported by a recent report produced by Economic Reports Unit in KSA (2013), where it reported that, there is a significant variation in the number of schools, teachers and students in different districts within the country. For example, some districts

included a larger number of students and teachers than other districts, and at the same time these areas in which the numbers of students are large, have a lower number of schools (Arab Economic Journal, 2013). This calls for attention from the Ministry of Education to be given to the distribution of students, teachers and special education provision not only between the districts but also within one particular district.

In this regard, these differences could be explained by the nature of the geographical location in which the schools are, i.e.: how large, small, far or near the area is from the services providers. It is important to mention here that, the Central District covers a large geographical area in KSA and includes the greatest population and number of schools compared to all the other districts. Norwich and Gray (2007) argued that location is a key contributing factor to the success of inclusive education. Students may not be provided with the appropriate special services provision in geographical areas where there is little access to qualified school staff that can facilitate the students' needs. Findings of this research corresponds with Norwich and Gray in that geographical locations of inclusive schools is a factor that has affected the availability and the quality of the provision of special services in mainstream schools. The findings of this research suggests that, since other districts are relatively smaller, they have somewhat of an advantage insofar as they have a better quality and more time-efficient special education provision. This can be explained by the fact that LEAs can easily manage schools spread over a smaller geographical area as opposed to large areas, where most of the attention is focused on those schools that are closer; hence, schools that are further away or in the rural areas are mostly neglected. A similar issue was also identified in countries that are more experienced with inclusive education than KSA, like the UK, where schools sometimes are unable to accommodate students with SEN based on various factors that include not having specialist units or the appropriate

supporting services needed for students to be fully catered for in their locality (Norwich and Gray 2007).

Given that the Central District is the largest in the country, it also has the largest population and therefore the number of students in the school could be a significant obstacle that might hinder the success of inclusion. Obviously, the larger the number of students, the less attention is given to students' specific needs and, therefore, the less likelihood for positive outcomes of inclusion. Given that in these schools the number of students per class sometimes exceeds 40 students, it is difficult for typically developing students to have an equal level of education because of the different abilities, let alone students with SEN (Al-Quraini, 2012). This is consistent with previous literature that reported teachers were struggling to meet the needs of different students in their classrooms, especially as the number of students with SEN included is on an increase (Forlin and Hopewell, 2006; Lambe and Bones, 2006).

In terms of the professional development aspect, the findings from the interviews with teachers indicate an assumption that teachers who are in the Central District are 'lucky' because they have training available;

> *In here there are no specialists to conduct this sort of training workshops like in Riyadh. There they have plenty of different training courses from which they can choose and attend* (T8. W. D).

The statistical ANOVA test, however, showed significant differences between the Central District and other districts, where the Central District was the most mentioned district in which teachers reported obstacles to inclusion, compared to other districts in the aspect of professional development. An explanation of this is that, since the Central District is, as mentioned earlier, a very large district, there are many teachers both from within the Central District and from other districts who apply for training, which is

mainly conducted in this district by virtue of it including the capital city of KSA and in which the Ministry of Education and the special education administration are located. This large number could extend the waiting time for a teacher's opportunity to take part in the necessary training programs. This was also mentioned by one teacher participating in this research, for example, that *"[…] teachers may wait for a whole year for her turn in the queue for the training course"* (T11. C. D).

Distance of schools could also be one of the contributing factors to the insufficient supervision and the lack of available special education supervisors. This was pointed out by one of the interviewed teachers from the Central District. This teacher reported insufficient supervisor visits to her current school, as compared to the school in which she was previously working, which was *"right next to the LEA, and the special education supervisor regularly came to the school monitoring, supervising, advising and guiding the teachers. This school is more than an hour away from the LEA and I could say she [special education supervisor] come only two times this year"* as a result of the far distance between the LEA, in which special education supervisors are located at the schools which they supervise (T9. C. D).

Another issue is that, from my own experience, a very large number of those who study for degrees in the Central District are from other districts and, therefore, once they graduate, they return to their own districts and become employed there. This is not only in special education subjects but also most of the other fields, including medical subjects, speech and language pathology, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and psychology. This is because these subjects are mostly available in universities in the Central District, rather than universities in other districts. Therefore, the majority come to study at this district but once they finish and graduate, they return and serve in other districts from which they originally came. This could explain the insufficient number

of professionals available in schools in the Central District, where in some cases two schools share one speech therapist, a situation that the teachers reported in the Central District. This, therefore, calls for a consideration to be given to the equality of the distribution of services between districts, in order to avoid such fluctuation and the potential problems it may bring as reported in this research. Future research is also needed in order to consider such variables and how they could be factors that promote or hinder the success of inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools across the country.

7.7 Summary of Chapter

In conclusion, this chapter discussed the findings of this research in light of existing literature and consideration of the KSA educational system, policy and cultural perspective. It also considered frameworks that were presented in chapter Three, such as models of disability and the Onion model of school culture. This discussion presented a number of explanations regarding the existing obstacles that were found in this research, as well as suggesting practical actions that can be considered for the purpose of overcoming them and promoting inclusion. This research found that there are obstacles facing inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream girls' schools in KSA as perceived by special education teachers. These were in the aspects of inclusive school culture, professional development and parent's involvement. However, the aspect of typically developing peers' interactions with students with SEN was found to be mostly positive.

Within the aspect of inclusive culture, head teachers were considered the core in creating an inclusive school culture. However as reported by most special education

teachers in this research, schools staff, including general education teachers and head teachers, lacked the knowledge and awareness about inclusion, its meaning and practical application. This has affected staff collaborative relationships both between teachers and head teachers and between general and special education teachers. This was eventually attributed to the lack of training, which this research has confirmed to be fundamental in promoting inclusive school.

The second aspect was the professional development aspect, in which a lack of in-service training was a major obstacle reported. In this aspect teachers also reported a need to be supported by the provision of additional human resources, including day- to-day support from RSESs, special education supervisors and other professional such as speech therapists. Establishing a collaborative approach that encourages parents to collaborate with schools and be involved in their children's learning was the main issue in the aspect of parents' involvement. Whilst teachers believe parents are happy with including their children with SEN in the mainstream schools, they perceived their involvement as insufficient. Finally, the positive interactions and acceptance between typically developing peers and students with SEN should be encouraged to promote inclusivity inside and outside the school context. Recommendations in this regard as well as answering the research questions will be presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to mainly answer the research questions of this research. In the first section, the research aims are restated, as well as the research questions, after which the primary findings of the research are outlined by responding to each of the research questions. Following this, practical and theoretical recommendations are generated from a consideration of the findings. Later in this chapter the original contribution of this research will be stated as well as an explanation of its limitations.

8.2 Summary of the Research

This research aimed to identify the key obstacles to inclusion of girl students with SENs, as perceived by special education teachers in KSA. This research explored the obstacles to inclusion in terms of four main aspects. These are: the inclusive culture of mainstream schools; teachers' professional development; the involvement and collaboration of parents of students with SENs; and the interactions of typically developing peers with students with SEN in the same schools. Following the identification of these obstacles, it also aimed to offer original contributions to this area of research by providing further explanations and possible solutions for the obstacles affecting the inclusion of students with SEN in KSA. In order to address these goals and answer the research questions, mixed methods were used by combining both questionnaires and interviews with Saudi special education teachers. Questionnaires were distributed to 500 Saudi special education teachers working in primary mainstream schools in all five districts of KSA. 331 completed questionnaires were

returned. In addition, eleven teachers were interviewed, from which two were in the East district, two in the West district, two in the North district, two in the South district and three in the Central district. Both methods were combined in this research in order to identify obstacles to inclusion of students with SEN in the KSA context from different angels. The following research questions were proposed and are presented along with their answers based on data obtained from the research.

Research Question One: What are the obstacles facing the inclusion of girls with special educational needs (SEN) in primary mainstream schools in the Kingdome of Saudi Arabia (KSA) from the perspective of special education teachers in terms of the schools' inclusive culture?

A number of obstacles have been identified in relation to the aspect of inclusive culture;

- The first obstacle reported by teachers was the issue of a lack of understanding and awareness in their schools of inclusion. According to teachers, although inclusion is no longer new, it is still not comprehensively understood by most of schools' teachers. For example, inclusion was reported to be predominantly perceived only in terms of physical location, rather than increasing the participation of students with SEN in all areas of school life, including what they can and cannot access. Another obstacle was the prevailing perception that the inclusion of students with SEN is the responsibility of special education teachers only and that most members of the school do not feel responsible for making the school inclusive. This means that most school staff believe that any matters related to inclusion and students with SEN should be addressed by special education teachers.

- An unwilling to share responsibility is reflective of another obstacle in this regard, which is a lack of collaboration between teachers and the leadership team. As inclusion is understood to be the responsibility of special education teachers, general education teachers and head teachers do not collaborate and are instead leaving the whole task to the special education teachers. The absence of teacher collaboration was attributed to a number of factors which include the inherent differences in initial teacher education programmes for the general and special needs teachers. This, results in a disconnection between the special and general education provision and a lack of understanding of each other's specific roles towards inclusive education. Other factors were, a lack of in-service training and a pay gap between both sets of teachers.

- Another obstacle is the lack of a prepared physical environment and infrastructure in the schools, as well as a delay in the procuring of resources from the Ministry of Education. In particular, a lack of creative and accessible playgrounds, as well as entrances in schools, especially for those students with physical disabilities, presents an immediate problem for the students with SENs. In addition, the signs of the school, in which discriminatory language is used such as, ‘mental sections’, ‘mental students’ or ‘teachers of mental students’, do not help to promote non-discriminatory attitudes and in turn a more inclusive culture and society. Even though this appears not to be intentional or to have a discriminatory intention, the use of such language results in the normalisation of the use of such discriminative language.

Research Question Two: What are the obstacles facing the inclusion of girls with special educational needs (SEN) in primary mainstream schools in the Kingdome of Saudi Arabia (KSA) from the perspective of special education teachers in terms of the provision of professional development of teachers?

- This research has shown that major obstacles face teachers in implementing inclusion effectively because of the lack of professional training for all teachers and head teachers working in inclusive mainstream schools. The majority of head teachers and general education teachers in inclusive schools were assigned to their positions before the training and knowledge regarding education of students with SEN became a requirement. Hence, their knowledge and experiences in special education and students with SEN are limited. This gap is further exacerbated by the absence of in-service training and programmes that are focused on the continuing professional development of teachers and head teachers that could otherwise address their training needs. Although special education teachers are prepared in their undergraduate teacher education, they reported that the quality of training they received was mostly theory based and far from what they face in practice. This has resulted in them struggling to meet the diverse SENs of their students.

- Another issue reported is the lack of specialist support and specialist human resources. More than half of all teachers talked about problems with premises and a lack of educational and specialist human resources. Those human resources included residential special education supervisors (RSESs) and

special education supervisors. Teachers acknowledge the importance of adequate provision of specialists for the school, insofar as they can provide consultation, guidance and advice for both general and special education teachers who teach students with SEN.

- In addition, teachers complained about an insufficient number of supervisors' visits and support in their schools, where the whole task of implementing inclusion and translating the policy into practice was generally left to individual schools.

- Another obstacle is the lack of other special education service providers, such as speech therapists, physiotherapists and psychologists who are important in providing special services needed for children. The RSEPI has highlighted how it is necessary for all students with SEN, whether they are in special education institutions or mainstream schools, to have access to all related services. Only through this will they benefit from inclusive practices (Ministry of Education of KSA, 2002). These services are clearly provided by professionals and specialist in the field such as speech therapist, for example. However, this perspective was not shared by schools in this research insofar as there was a shortage of professionals and, consequently, availability of the required services. It was felt by special education teachers that the assistance of professionals would be beneficial to the promotion of inclusion in mainstream

schools, and therefore they hoped to have more specialists who would advise them and be better involved with the school.

Research Question Three: What are the obstacles facing the inclusion of girls with SEN in primary mainstream schools in the Kingdome of Saudi Arabia KSA in terms of the involvement and collaboration of parents of students with SEN with school?

- Whilst teachers believe that parents are positive about the inclusion of their children in mainstream schools, the majority of parents are not collaborating enough with school and are not involved in their children's education. Findings of this research from both questionnaires and interviews, this lack of parental involvement and collaboration with school was attributed to a number of factors which are categorised as parental obstacles, which include: parents' educational level; total dependency of parents on teachers; parents' low expectations about their children's potential to learn; school obstacles, which include insufficient efforts made by schools to encourage parents' involvement, and other obstacles, including lack of transportation.

- Parental obstacles: the parents' level of education was mentioned by the majority of participants to be a hindrance to parents' involvement. Teachers highlighted how this makes parents completely reliant upon teachers as they perceived as more knowledgeable than them and therefore this reduces the level

of their involvement and collaboration with the school. At the same time, no effort was reported to be made by schools to educate parents as they believe the issue of educating parents should be the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and the LEA. Moreover, teachers reported that some parents have low expectations of their child's ability to gain knowledge and therefore parents do not feel that their involvement would make any difference.

- School obstacles: teachers reported a minimum level of effort to encourage parental involvement and to increase parents' awareness regarding their children's potential to learn. This was clear from the limited set of opportunities given to parents to be involved as the two main occasions in which parents are invited are parents' meetings and annual ceremonies. This was particularly clear when it came to articulating the students' IEP where the parents have almost no voice in their children's IEPs and this became totally the responsibility of special education teachers only. This practice was justified by the teachers firstly, because they got used to doing it by themselves and secondly, parents never asked about it and therefore the parents' participation was reduced to a minimum level.

- Other obstacles include limited transportation for parents to come to school and having other children with whom the mother has to stay.

Research Question Four: what are the obstacles facing the inclusion of girls with SEN in primary mainstream schools in KSA in terms of the typically developing peers' interactions with and the acceptance of students with SEN?

- The overall findings from both questionnaire and interviews were positive and no particular obstacles in terms of students' interaction and acceptance to each other were found. However, teachers reported that they lack support from the head teachers and general education teachers in promoting the students' interactions.

Research Question Five: Do participants' responses differ based on their geographical location in terms of the four aspects of this research?

Significant differences between teachers' responses in different districts of KSA were found in two of the four aspects of the obstacles to inclusion in this research: these aspects are the inclusive culture of schools and the provision of professional development for teachers. These differences found were between the Central District and all the other districts.

- In terms of the inclusive culture of schools, this significant difference could be attributed by the fact that the Central District is the largest among other districts and therefore this could influence the availability and the quality of the special services provided by the LEA in this district. This is because the LEA can easily manage and serve schools spread over a smaller geographical area in terms of better and faster special education provision, as opposed to large areas where

most of the attention goes to nearby schools and maybe less attention is given to the further ones or those in rural areas.

- In addition, the Central District has the largest population of all the districts and also the largest number of students in mainstream schools where sometimes there are more than 40 students per class (Al-Quraini, 2012). Given the large number of students and therefore the extra workload that teachers and head teachers have to manage could also contribute to worsening the case which in turn results in boredom and low enthusiasm to put more effort into promotion of inclusion of students with SEN. This issue was highlighted in the response of a teacher from the Central District. Another explanation to these differences could also be the fact that many school buildings are old and unsuitable for students with SEN, as they were built before inclusion programmes were implemented. Importantly, as previously mentioned, they were designed without thinking of the need of students with SEN, such as accessible entrances and exits, lifts as well as creative, interesting and accessible playgrounds, which are the obstacles reported by the teachers in the Central District.

- In terms of teachers' professional development, the differences found were explained by the fact that many teachers, both from within the Central District and from other districts, apply for training in the Central District, because most of the higher educational establishments are also located in there. It is also an important administrative and political centre, since it includes Riyadh the

capital city of KSA and in which the Ministry of Education and the Special Education Administration are located. The large number of teachers from all districts in training lengthened the waiting time for a teacher's opportunity to take part in the necessary training programs, as reported by another one of the participating teachers from the Central District.

Whilst this is the case in terms of training, the distance and the location of the school was mentioned by one participant to be a contributing factor behind the issue of insufficient monitoring and supervising the process of inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. This Central District's participant worked as a teacher in two separately located schools in the same District and reported having insufficient supervisor visits in one school due to the large distances between the schools and LEA where the supervisors are located: *"which are more than an hour away in distance"* (T9. C. D).

- Finally, there was a lack of available support from professionals in inclusive schools involved in this research, which included speech therapists, physiotherapists and psychologists. This could be explained by the fact that since the Central District includes universities that provide degrees in different subjects, such as special education and also other medical subjects including speech and language pathology, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and psychology. These courses are rarely offered in other universities in other districts and consequently students from all over KSA come to the Central

District, mostly for the purpose of studying and not for working there, as they want to return to their own cities in other districts. Given the above, the other districts have relatively sufficient, although not adequate, number of professional in their schools compared to the Central District.

8.3 Recommendations

Based on the key findings of this research, this section presents a number of recommendations for changes and improvements to enhance the inclusion of students with SEN in KSA. It is important to note, however, that if changes are to be implemented successfully, there must be a realistic understanding of, and preparation for, the obstacles to be expected. Various studies have found that even when proposed programmes are promising in themselves, they are often hampered by an ineffective school system (Meijer, 2014). Such problems could involve how well information is dispersed, the ability and/or willingness of the key people to access expertise in relevant fields, how much resistance arises due to possible dramatic changes, and to what extent will implemented changes affect the routines and/or (possibly perceived) power of individual and/or group positions (Kirkland and Sutch, 2009). However, given the fact that I will be holding a position as a lecturer in higher education institution, I have an opportunity to make these recommendations alive either directly as I will be responsible for students-teachers training in the university or in-directly by raising these recommendations to the relevant stakeholder in the university who are concerned about the development of inclusive education and the area of special education in general. The recommendations resulted from my research are listed below:

At the Ministry of Education level, this research recommends that:

- The Ministry of Education should work on increasing the level of awareness and understanding amongst all schools' staff members about inclusion. This could be best achieved through a process of constant debate, discussion and deepening of ideas instead of a complete reliance on the information that already exists. These debates and discussions should be encouraged by policy makers, academics and educational supervisors. This understanding should be incorporated beyond just physical integration, but rather it is the issue of welcoming students as full members of the group and valuing them for the contribution they make, as well as ensuring their maximum participation in all aspects of school life (Farrell, 2004).

- The Ministry of Education should offer head teachers workshops that increase their awareness and develop their knowledge about inclusion and students with SEN, so that they effectively work towards promoting inclusion and share the responsibility of enhancing the success of children's inclusion in their schools. This is because schools' principals have an important role in reducing and/or removing obstacles in inclusive school (Hattie, 2005).

- The Ministry of Education should offer awareness rising opportunities for general education teachers, especially about their responsibility for enhancing the learning and success of students with SEN. It is crucially important to ensure that they share the responsibility of making the schools inclusive and not

just leave it to special education teachers, as reported by most of the teachers participating in this research. This could be achieved through establishing a practical guide in which specific roles and duties and the way in which they could be shared and performed should be clearly explained. This will increase the awareness of teachers, help them in overcoming the obstacles of ambiguity related to the specific roles of both special and general education teachers, and thus minimise the lack of effective collaboration.

- It is also recommended that, the Ministry of Education place more emphasis on adequately preparing future teachers for teaching students with SEN in mainstream schools and classrooms (Elshabrawy and Hassanein, 2015). Universities should better equip teachers through providing a practically oriented pre-service training scheme. This should link theory and practice by allowing fieldwork throughout the university years, not just a term at the end of the university level. This system should exist not only for special education teachers but also for general education teachers, as they will be, and are in fact, currently required to teach students with SEN. Therefore, they too should have at least one year of training in special education prior to graduating from university. This will eventually be of great help in promoting positive attitudes and reducing the 'culture shock' to which underprepared yet newly qualified teachers might be exposed (Abbott, 2007). This is because the current university system in KSA allows only a term's training in the final year of the

undergraduate degree. This is clearly insufficient in terms of preparing a teacher adequately for practice, as reported by teachers in this research.

- From this research, it is also recommended that inclusive practices should always be followed by continuous monitoring by supervision visits to schools to ensure an appropriate application of the policy. It is recommended that therefore, a monitoring system is established by the Ministry of Education for schools that have inclusion programmes. This monitoring system should aim to assess all staff, including head teachers and teachers and their practices. This includes assessment of the efforts schools make to ensure participation of students with SEN in all aspects of the school life.

- It is also recommended that, in order for students with SEN to have equal opportunities and to have positive experiences in mainstream schools as their typically developing peers, the current schools' physical environment should be reformed. This restructuring should ensure fully accessible and prepared physical environments that enable full and facilitated participation of students with SEN. This includes prepared playgrounds, accessible entrances, and special support services.

- Given the above, it is further recommended that, different types of partnerships and relationships are developed between schools, LEAs and other special institutions to ensure the sufficient special services required for the students in

all schools. This will solve the issue of the students being referred to the special service they need outside the school which could otherwise be provided in the school, as reported in this research.

- Furthermore, it was generally acknowledged by the majority of the participants in this research that there is a lack of training for head teachers and teachers. Hence, it is important that the Ministry of Education develop in-service training and professional programmes that helps teachers to understand differences among students and managing inclusive classrooms. This training should also include staff members who already have special education training.

At the school level, it is recommended from this research that:

- It is recommended from this research that, staff could establish professional development programmes (PLCs) in which every teacher is a learner in this community and in which the main purpose is collaboration. This is a specific area in which all educators can bring their experience and knowledge to the table and therefore allows to generate new knowledge whilst responding to the unique needs of the specific students (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2009). PLCs are likely to result in important outcomes for teachers and administrators as well as significant achievements for their students. In addition, they would also solve the issue of resistance on the part of general education teachers to attend training workshops as reported in this research. This is because, in PLCs, leadership positions, power, authority, and decision-making are shared between the

community members. This will facilitate both a better and a broader range of professional interaction between schoolteachers (Watson, 2014). Examples of this include teachers having a greater level of responsibility in terms of leadership; which will, in turn, lead to a stronger sense of not only responsibility but also ownership for the enhancement and improvement process of the school. In addition, the teacher will personally foster deeper professional confidence that will result in an ability to meet the students with SEN learning requirements, as well as an ability to reflect on themselves and their own professional development. Through this self-reflection, the culture of the school and the staff it comprises of will improve, insofar as professional relationships will strengthen and there will be more productive inter-faculty communication and interaction (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2017).

- It is further recommended that, for collaboration to be successful, special and general education teachers should learn and develop collaborative skills. This could be through modelling other schools who have positive and successful experience in using effective and advanced collaborative skills (Hoffman and Jenkins, 2002). Doing so is best during the initial teacher preparation period (Villa et al., 1996), because it is necessary for teachers to be aware of the demands prior to going into the profession. It is recommended, therefore that, the Ministry of Education include this in the undergraduate teacher education programmes, especially because teachers' collaboration is not a focus in existing teacher education programs in KSA (Al-Quraini, 2011).

- In is also recommended that, there should also be greater opportunities for the promotion of the students' interactions by increasing the number of social activities sessions in which both groups of students interact with each other. This should be implemented through collaborative efforts of schools' head teachers and general education teachers, as well as special education teachers.

- Moreover**,** one of the major obstacles to enhancing inclusion of students with SEN in KSA schools is that of collaboration between parents and schools, as reported in this research. It is recommended therefore that school create more opportunities and events that encourage parents' involvement. These could take the form of an assembly, where parents can also be consulted regarding how they can be better involved with supporting the development of their children. Schools should reach out to parents, become familiar with the factors that might prevent or encourage their involvement in their child's education and provide all the facilities required in order to encourage this relationship, such as availability of transportation, timing of meetings, schools' layout and school culture.

- In the longer-term, it is recommended that Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) should be established and through this, engage parents in discussions that enlighten them in ways by which they can support their children's learning and development and to interact with the school community. Additionally, this

could involve encouraging interaction among parents themselves through establishing parents' organisations in which they can share their experiences, gain information and be helped in reaching appropriate educational resources that can assist them in promoting their children's learning. This is because if inclusion of students with SEN in inclusive schools to be effective, full participation of parents with the inclusive school is essential (Morris, 2001).

8.4 Limitations of the Research

Although this research has yielded valuable findings pertaining to the obstacles to the inclusion of students with SEN in the KSA context, it is important not to overlook the fact that it has some limitations. One of the limitations of this research is that it only focuses on special education teachers' perspectives. It would have been richer if other perspectives were considered, such as those of head teachers, parents and the students themselves. Having stated this, by no means there is underestimation of the value of the point of view of special education teachers. They are the most experienced individuals who can clearly state what is taking place in the practice of meeting the SENs of the students. Further studies of this nature can also explore the feelings and perspectives of those other parties and thereby illuminate equally important areas for future inquiry.

Another limitation is that the research only involves a female sample. However, this is based on two reasons. Firstly, there are cultural restrictions due to the fact that the education system is separated by gender; hence it is culturally prevented for a female

researcher to conduct research in a school for boys. Although it could have been possible to sample male participants through other means such as emails, it would have been at different level from the contact that I have been able to make with female teachers. The second reason is that, the large majority of research studies about inclusion of students with SEN in KSA educational environment are centred on male students by male researchers. To my knowledge, there is a significant lack of research surrounding the perspectives of female teachers.

Another limitation is the number of participants in the qualitative portion of the research. The findings of this research would have been richer had there been a larger number of interviewees available. However, the number of the participating teachers (eleven teachers) was relatively acceptable, especially because interviews are usually rare in educational research in the KSA context. This is due to the Saudi 'culture which makes it difficult for some to honestly discuss problems objectively, sometimes for fear of state authority' (Cook, 1998: 98).

8.5 Original Contributions of the Research

This thesis has focused on obstacles to inclusive education for students with SEN in KSA, as only following the identification of these obstacles will it be possible to establish practical solutions, thus enabling space for a more effective implementation of inclusion in KSA. One of the chief contributions of this research in response to the gap in literature relates to the way it has emphasised the considerable degree to which the issue of inclusion of students with SEN in KSA must be considered by all relevant governmental departments and stakeholders, especially with respect to the dismantling

of obstacles to inclusive practice. The importance of SEN inclusion in the specific national context of KSA has been clarified by these research findings and conclusions, many of which have illuminated the precise nature of the obstacles regularly faced by special education teachers who are in practice. A second primary point of value of the current research relates to the way in which it has shed light on the complex nature of the issue of inclusion in the context of KSA. This research can, therefore, form the basis of many of the initiatives required in the country to facilitate the progress of implementing inclusive education.

A third unique contribution of this research is that it was conducted not only in one city or one district, but rather was conducted throughout the whole of KSA. It enabled equal opportunity for every school in the selected cities to take part in the investigation through its use of random sampling techniques, thus, enabling for the generalisation of its results. Given that, a comparison between different districts of the country in terms of inclusive education provision can be made which, as far as the researcher aware, has not been done before in KSA.

A fourth unique contribution in response to the gap in the literature was a focus in this research on girls education in KSA. The Saudi educational system is segregated in terms of gender at all levels of education, from elementary to university level (Al-Salloom, 1999), but much of the existing research in relation to inclusion in Saudi Arabia's schools has dealt primarily with male subjects (Al- Salloom, 1999). Female teachers are often overlooked in research, despite the fact that 52% of teachers in Saudi

Arabia are female (OECD, 2016). Therefore, investigating the understudied population of female teachers is a significant contextual contribution for this research.

Finally, most studies of educational research, and special education specifically, conducted in KSA, rely on the scientific approach, which uses questionnaires for data collection (Al-Samade, 2008; Hanfy, 2008; Al-Fahily, 2009). Hence, there remains a noticeable shortage of studies that use a mixed approach that is based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative research approaches. To the researcher's knowledge, this research is the first one to use a mixed method approach and to be conducted throughout the KSA, its focus being an examination of the obstacles that currently exist regarding inclusive education. Therefore, this research has the potential to inform future social science studies conducted in KSA concerning important methodological considerations. The findings contained in this research are a testament to the utility of a mixed methods approach, especially in the context of examining primary schools undergoing the process of inclusion in KSA. Given the above, identifying obstacle to inclusion from different angles, can be the basis on which progress can be made not only in inclusive schools but also in an inclusive society.

8.6 Reflective Statement

Completing this thesis has been a momentous experience for me, replete with trials, pains, and joys in equal measure. Some of the most memorable experiences involved the research fieldwork, meeting other researchers, participating in conferences, and holding fascinating discussions in seminars. Ultimately, my time at the University of Birmingham, spent in seminars, lectures, and conversation with other researchers, has

been valuable, and the modules I took associated with my research topic greatly developed my ability to think critically. At the same time, my perspective regarding the cultural issues surrounding inclusion and special educational needs (SEN) was developed considerably during this time. I have also expanded my understanding of how the obstacles to inclusive practice must be addressed for SEN students in mainstream schools, and I expect that I will now be able to enter the field with an arsenal of relevant theoretical and practical knowledge. Along with all these benefits, as previously noted, there were times when the challenges I faced felt insurmountable, when I lacked direction and when the unclearness of the task that lay ahead of me was very frustrating. Experiencing other hard challenges on the personal level was also difficult to manage. Nevertheless, having left my family in Saudi Arabia to make this PhD journey, I now feel I can make positive changes in the field of special education by applying what I have learnt to enhancing the lives of SEN children and their families in my home country.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 4: Questionnaire

Questionnaire English Version

QUESTIONNAIRE CONSENT FORM

Title of Project:

Obstacles to inclusion of students with special educational needs (SEN) in primary mainstream girls schools in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) from the perspective of special education teachers

Please tick all boxes

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above research. ☐
2. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the research before completing the questionnaire as the researcher will not be able to withdrawal any participant in the questionnaire after they are collected back as they will be all completely anonymous and no participants can be identified. ☐
4. I understand that relevant data collected during the research will be used for the purpose of the research only and I give my permission to the researcher to use it. ☐
5. I agree to take part in the above research. ☐

Name of Participant	Date	Signature

Name of Researcher:

Basmah Fahad Alshahrani

Dear Teacher,

My name is Basmah Fahad Alshahrani, I am conducting a research about "**obstacles to inclusion of students with special educational needs (SEN) in primary mainstream girls schools in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) from the perspective of special education teachers**" in order to obtain a PhD degree from the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom. The aim of this study is to reveal difficulties and problems that confront its implementation and prevent its success. It also aims to provide suggestions and recommendations that help in overcoming these difficulties and increase awareness of its importance and its role in improving the quality of SEN children's lives. Therefore, through your experience as a special education teacher working with pupils with SEN in mainstream schools, I am looking forward to kindly having your opinions on all of the questionnaire parts and I assure you that all your responses will be anonymous and will be used only to achieve the research aims.

- As part of this research, I am conducting interviews with special education teachers and your participation would be appreciated. If you would like to take part in an interview, please tick the box bellow and kindly provide your contact details, otherwise if you rather do not prefer to provide your contact details, you can contact me on my contact details stated bellow ☐
- If you would like to know about the findings of this research and what implications it may make, please provide your email address and I will be happy to provide you with a copy of them once it is finalized ☐

  Your email address: ……

  Basmah Alshahrani - [redacted]

Part One of the Questionnaire:

Personal Information

District:

- ❑ North / City: ……
- ❑ South / City: ……
- ❑ East / City: ……..
- ❑ West / City: …….

Special Needs Qualifications:

- ❑ Diploma in special education
- ❑ Bachelor in special education
- ❑ Masters in special education

Number of years of experience in teaching students with SEN:

- ❑ Less than 5 years.
- ❑ 5- Less than 10 years.
- ❑ 10- Less than15 years.
- ❑ 15 or more

Part Two: this part considers a number of obstacles that might face inclusion and hinder its success from four main aspects that are; inclusive culture of school, professional development for school staff, parents' involvement and collaboration with school and typically developing peers' interactions with students with SEN.

- Could you please tick the boxes that reflect your extent of agreement with each of the questionnaire's items?

Aspect	#	Items	SA	A	N	D	SD
Inclusive Culture	1	There is a lack of understanding of the concept of inclusion amongst school staff.					
	2	There is an absence of shared understanding that inclusion is about increasing participation of students with SEN in, as well as access to, the school.					
	3	There is a lack of collaboration between general education and special education teachers in teaching students with SEN.					

	4	Students with SEN are seen by school staff as individual with lower level of abilities and skills.					
	5	Staff avoid labelling students according to notions of ability.					
	6	School head teacher do not feel responsible for making the school inclusive.					
Professional Development	7	There is a lack of training that help teachers to acquire new and different ways of teaching students with SEN.					
	8	School's staff are not trained enough to teach with students with SEN which hinders the effectiveness of inclusion.					
	9	Teachers receive training in devising and managing collaborative learning activities.					
	10	There are regular inspection visits by special education supervisors from Local Educational Authority and/or Ministry of Education to monitor the inclusive practices in the school.					
	11	There is a limited specialist support from Local Educational Authority to promote inclusion of students with SEN in the school					
	12	The school lacks a multi-disciplinary team, including psychologists and physiotherapist, speech and language therapists.					
Parents' involvement	13	Parents of students with SEN appear to accept including their children in mainstream schools and are happy with it.					
	14	Parents of students with SEN do not consider the teachers' daily reports about their children such as homework notebook.					
	15	Parents of students with SEN are not collaborating enough with teachers.					
	16	Parents of students with SEN are not keen on asking teachers about what they can do to support their children's learning at home.					
	17	There are a variety of occasions in which parents of students with SEN can discuss the progress of and concerns about their children.					
	18	Staff encourage the involvement of parents in their children's learning.					
Peers' Interactions	19	Typically developing students do not appear to accept students with SEN in the school.					
	20	Typically developing students bully their peers with SEN (by using discriminatory name calling that reflects disability)					
	21	Opportunities in which both typically developing students and their peers with SEN can interact with each other are limited					
	22	Typically developing students do not prefer to share their knowledge and skills with their peers with SEN.					
	23	Typically developing students do not prefer to set next to students with SEN.					
	24	Typically developing students do not prefer to play with students with SEN.					

Thank you for your time.

Questionnaire Arabic Version

نموذج الموافقة

عنوان البحث: "الصعوبات الاجتماعية التي تعيق تطبيق برامج دمج ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في مدارس التعليم الابتدائي العام في المملكة العربية السعودية من وجهة نظر معلمات التربية الخاصة."

اسم الباحث بسام قاسم الشهري

1. قرأت وفهمت صحيفة المعلومات المرفقة للدراسة الحالية. ☐
2. وافقت طواعية على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة، وطرح الأسئلة، وحصلت على إجابات مرضية على هذه الأسئلة. ☐
3. أدرك أن المشاركة طوعية وأنا حر في الانسحاب قبل اكتمال وتسليم الاستبانة دون بداء أي أسباب، دون أن يؤثر ذلك على علاقتي بالباحث أو الجامعة التي يعمل بها. ☐
4. أدرك أن البيانات ذات الصلة التي يتم جمعها خلال هذه الدراسة ستستخدم لغرض الدراسة فقط وهذا إذن للباحث باستخدامها. ☐
5. وأوافق على المشاركة في الدراسة المذكورة أعلاه. ☐

اسم المشارك	التاريخ	التوقيع

الباحث بسام قاسم الشهري

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

سعادة الأخت الفاضلة حفظها الله

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته وبعد،

فإني أقوم بدراسة ميدانية عن "الصعوبات التي تواجه تطبيق برامج الدمج في مدارس التعليم العام للبنات في المملكة العربية السعودية من وجهة نظر معلمات التربية الخاصة" لنيل درجة الدكتوراه في التربية الخاصة تخصص دمج وذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة بجامعة بريدة. وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على أكثر الصعوبات التي تواجه أو تعيق تنفيذ برامج الدمج في مدارس التعليم العام، كما تهدف إلى تقديم المقترحات والتوصيات التي تساعد على التغلب هذه المشكلات ومحاولة إيجاد حلول مناسبة لها بما يحقق الفائدة في المملكة العربية السعودية.

ومن خلال عملك الميداني وتجربتك في التعامل مع المشكلات التي تواجه برامج الدمج فإنني آمل بإبداء الرأي في جميع بنود الاستمارة المرفقة وذلك بكل حرص على التعامل مع هذه الآراء بسرية تامة وبما يخدم أهداف البحث العلمي فقط.

* إن كنت ممن يرغب في معرفة نتائج هذه الدراسة فسيسعدني تزويدك بنسخة الكترونية على البريد الخاص بك بعد الانتهاء منها.

*كجزء من هذه الدراسة يقوم الباحث بعمل قائمة مع معلمات التربية الخاصة وشاركتك في هذا الجزء سوف تكون ذات قيمة مهمة للباحث ويسرني أن تشاركني. إذا كنت ممن يرغبن المشاركة في المقابلة أرجو تزويدي بتفاصيل الاتصال, او بالتخاطب مع معلومات الاتصال الخاصة بالباحث المتواضع.

البريد الخاص بك: .....

الباحثة بمسمى فهد المشعري – [redacted]

الجزء الأول: المعلومات الشخصية

المنطقة:

- الشمالية (مدينة: .....)
- الجنوبية (مدينة: .....)
- الشرقية (مدينة: .....)
- الغربية (مدينة: .....)
- الوسطى (مدينة: .....)

المؤهل العلمي:

- دبلوم في التربية الخاصة
- بكالوريوس في التربية الخاصة
- ماجستير في التربية الخاصة.

عدد سنوات الخبرة في تدريس ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة:

- أقل من خمس سنوات
- من ٥ – أقل من ١٠ سنوات
- ١٠ – أقل من ١٥ سنة
- من ١٥ فأكثر

لجزء الثاني فضلا اختاري فقرة تتيتعكس مدى تفقك معكلاً منبنود الاستبانة:

1- يشمل هذا لجزء عدد من لعبارات تتيتعكس شن التقديتواجتطبيقبرامج لدمج منناحية وجود أو عدم وجوذفقة دمج داخل لمدرسة.

لمحور	م	لعبـــــــــــــــــــــــــــــارة	أوفق بشده	أوفق	وأفق لي حد ما	لا أوفق	لا أوفق بشده
ثقافه الدمج	1	فالتقص ور وضح لف هوم لتربية لخاصة وذوي الاحتياجات لخاصة لدى لعاملين في لمدرسة كم على مات لتربية لعامة، الادارة ميقي لعاملات.					
	2	تفتقر لمدرسة لي لتلاف لشامل على ان لدمج يعزي زيادة شاركة ذوي الاحتياجات لخاصة في لمدرسة وكذلك إمكانية الالتحاق ب ها.					
	3	تفتقر لمدرسة لي روح لتعاون بين معلمي لتربية لخاصة ولعامة فيتيتعلق م ذوي الاحتياجات لخاصة					
	4	ينظر لى لطلبات لمرفوض بذوي الاحتياجات لتعليمية لخاصة على لأ همفلراد ذوي اهتمامات ومهارات ومعلومات قليل.					
	5	يتجنب أعضاء لمدرسة إداه لطلبات من ذوي الاحتياجات لخاص قبلس ماتعكس إلعاقة.					
	6	لا يسعى كل أعضاء لمدرسة لي جعل لمدرسة أكثر دمجا اعتقاداً من همبان ها مسؤولية معلمات لتعليم لخاص.					
	م	لعبـــــــــــــــــــــــــــــارة	أوفق بشده	أوفق	وأفق لي حد ما	لا أوفق	لا أوفق بشده
التطوير المهني والتدريب	7	فالتقص ور في برامج لتدريب لتي تستاعد لمعلمين على لتساب طرق حديثة ومختلفة للتعامل مع الأطفال ذوي الاحتياجات لخاصة لمختلفة.					
	8	أعضاء لمدرسة غير مدربين بشكل كافي للتعامل مع ذوي الاحتياجات لخاصة مما قد يعرقل لنجاح لدمج.					
	9	يتلقى معلمات لتعليم لعام لتدريب لكافي في بناء وإدارة الأنشطة لتعليمية لمشتركة ولتعاون بين طالب لعاديين وذوي الاحتياجات لخاصة.					
	10	يوجد زيارات منتظمة ومستمرة من إدارة لتربية لخاصة لمتابعة مدى فعالية لدمج ونجاحه					
	11	فالتقص ور توفر لموارد لمشرية لمتخصصة في مجال لدمج وذوي الاحتياجات لخاصة من إدارة لتربية لخاصة لتعزيز نجاح لدمج					
	12	تفتقر لمدرسة لي ملفات تتعدد لمتخصصات بمكن لك من الحصول لنطاق لكامل ول الج لطبيعي.					
اتجاهات أولياء الأمور وتعاونهم	م	لعبـــــــــــــــــــــــــــــارة	أوفق بشده	وفق	وأفق لي حد ما	لا أوفق	لا أوفق بشده
	13	أولياء أمور ذوي الاحتياجات لخاصة تتقبل دمج بنائهم في مدارس لتعليم لعام وتعاونبذلك.					

	14	لا يتعاون أولياء أمور الطلبات ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة مع المعلمين بشكل كاف.						
	15	لا يهتم أولياء أمور ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة بتبادل التقارير والملاحظات المرسلة من المعلم في الدفتر الخاص بالملاحظات.						
	16	لا يحرص أولياء أمور الأطفال ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة ما يمكن أن يقدموه لدعم عملية تعليم أبنائهم في المنزل.						
	17	يوجد لدى العديد من المدارس المتنوعة التي يستطيع أولياء الأمور من خلالها التواصل مع المدرسة بشكل مستمر ومتابعة أبنائهم ومدى تقدمهم.						
	18	تشجع المدرسة أولياء الأمور على المشاركة الفعالة مع المدرسة وتعززها						
اتجاهات الأقران من غير ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة	م	العبـــــــــــــــــــــــــــــــــارة	أوافق بشدة	وافق	وأافق إلى حد ما	لا أوافق	لا أوافق بشدة	
	19	يسيء بعض الطلبة العاديين للطلبة ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في المدرسة، مثل ضربهم أو الاستهزاء بهم.						
	20	يوجد لدى العديد من الأنشطة المتنوعة والتي من خلالها يتعزز تفاعل الطلبات من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة مع قرنائهم العاديين.						
	21	تشارك الطلبات من غير ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة قرنائهن في التغلب على المشاكل التي يتواجهن معهم في الدروس.						
	22	يعطى كلاً من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة وقرنائهم العاديين نفس الفرص في المشاركة في الأنشطة والبرامج الصفية.						
	23	لا يميل الأطفال من غير ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة إلى اللعب مع قرنائهم من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة.						
	24	لا يتقبل الأطفال من غير ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة دمج قرنائهم ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في المدارس العادية.						

شكراً جزيلاً لوقتك!
الباحثة ببسمة الشهري

Appendix 5: INTERVIEW
Interview English Version

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Title of Project:

Obstacles to inclusion of students with special educational needs (SEN) in primary mainstream girls schools in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) from the perspective of special education teachers"

Please tick all boxes

6. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above research. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐
7. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without being affected. ☐
8. I understand that relevant data collected during the research will be used for the purpose of the research only and I give my permission to the researcher to use it. ☐
9. I agree to take part in the above research. ☐

Name of Participant	Date	Signature

Name of Researcher:

Basmah Fahad Alshahrani

Semi-structured Interview Schedule

Interviewee:

Location:

Date:

Time:

District / City: …….

Special Needs Qualifications:

- ❑ Diploma in special education
- ❑ Bachelor in special education
- ❑ Masters in special education

Number of years of experience in teaching students with SEN:

- ❑ Less than 5 years.
- ❑ 5- Less than 10 years.
- ❑ 10- Less than15 years.
- ❑ 15 or more

Interview dimensions:

The first dimension: inclusive culture of the school:

- How is inclusion understood and practiced by staff in your school? Why/How?
- How would you describe the attitudes of teachers and head teacher towards inclusion and students with SEN?
- To what extent do school staff work collaboratively to promote inclusion of students with SEN? How/Why?
- To what extent does school leadership encourage inclusion and work towards its effective implementation? How/why?
- Do general education teachers collaborate with you in teaching students with SEN and encouraging their participation? Why/How?
- Do students with SEN take part in all aspect of the school and participate in its activities? How/Why?
- Are resources available to promote inclusion of students with SEN?
- Are there awareness programmes to learn about inclusion and students with SEN in your school? Why/ why not? What kind of awareness programs?

Second dimension: The Provision of Professional Development for staff:

- To what extent are there special education training programs for school staff including general education teachers and head teachers?
- Do you as special education teachers receive in-services training, how often and what kind of training?

- How would you describe the relationship between school and special supervisors in the LEA in terms of monitoring inclusion and providing specialist support?
- What other professional assistance do you think is lacking and therefore poses an obstacle to effective inclusion and how can it be overcome?

Third dimension: The Involvement and Collaboration of Parents of Students with SEN with the School:

- How would you describe the relationship between the school and the parents? In other words, to what extent do parents collaborate with the school and get involved in their children's education? And in what ways?
- Does the school management encourage parents' involvement? How?
- What kind of activities the school arraigns for parents?
- Are there awareness programs for parents about the importance of their involvement in their children education?
- What factors do you think contribute to parents' involvement or the lack of it?
- How could parents' involvement be enhanced/ in another word how do you think parents could be encouraged to collaborate more with school and get involved in their children's education?

Fourth dimension: Typically Developing Peers' Interaction with Students with SEN

- How would you describe the attitude of typically developing students towards their peers with SEN and their interactions with them?
- Does the school encourage both students' interaction? Why/why not? How?
- What kind of activities do the school arrange to get both kinds of students to interact? Were they useful?
- What factors you think influencing their attitudes and interactions?
- From your experience and daily observation of students, what effects does inclusion have on students with special educational needs in your school?
- To what extent do you see peers' acceptance and interaction as barriers to effective inclusion?
- What suggestions would you make in order to improve inclusion in your schools?

Interview Arabic Version

نموذج الموافقة

عنوان البحث: "الصعوبات الاجتماعية التي تعيق تطبيق برامج دمج ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في مدارس التعليم الابتدائي العام في المملكة العربية السعودية من وجهة نظر معلمات التربية الخاصة."

اسم الباحث: عبدالله عبدالرحمن الزيدي

6. قرأت وفهمت صفحة المعلومات المؤرخة للدراسة المذكورة أعلاه. وقد سنحت لي الفرصة للنظر في المعلومات، وطرح الأسئلة، وحصلت على إجابات مرضية على هذه الأسئلة. ☐

7. أدرك أن مشاركتي طوعية وأنا حر في الانسحاب في أي وقت دون إبداء أي أسباب، دون أن يؤثر ذلك عليّ. ☐

8. أدرك أن البيانات ذات الصلة التي يتم جمعها خلال هذه الدراسة قد تستخدم لأغراض الدراسة فقط وهذا إذن للباحث باستخدامها. ☐

9. أوافق على المشاركة في الدراسة المذكورة أعلاه. ☐

اسم المشارك	التاريخ	التوقيع

أسئلة المقابلة

اسم المعلمة:

المدرسة:

الوقت:

المنطقة /المدينة:

المؤهل العلمي:

- ❑ دبلوم في التربية الخاصة
- ❑ بكالوريوس في التربية الخاصة
- ❑ ماجستير في التربية الخاصة.

عدد سنوات الخبرة في تدريس ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة:

- ❑ أقل من خمس سنوات
- ❑ من ٥ – أقل من ١٠ سنوات
- ❑ ١٠ – أقل من ١٥ سنة
- ❑ من ١٥ فأكثر

أبعاد المقابلة:

البعد الأول: مدى توافر وعي وتوفر فلسفة الدمج في مدارس الدمج.

- إلى أي مدى تعتقد أن مفهوم الإدماج مفهوم بشكل مناسب من قبل موظفي المدرسة؟ لماذا كيف؟
- كيف تصفين اتجاهات معلمات التربية العامة والإدارة المدرسية نحو الدمج والطلبات ذوي الاحتياجات التعليمية الخاصة؟
- إلى أي مدى يعمل موظفو المدرسة بشكل تعاوني ويتقاسمون مسؤولية دفع الاندماج والعمل على جعل المدرسة أكثر شمولية؟ كيف لماذا؟
- إلى أي مدى تشجع القيادة المدرسية على الإدماج والعمل على تنفيذها بفعالية؟ كيف لماذا؟
- هل يتعاون المعلمون العامون معك في تعليم الطلاب ذوي التعليم الخاص وتشجع مشاركتهم؟ كيف، لماذا، لماذا لا؟
- هل يشارك الطلاب ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في جميع جوانب المدرسة ويشاركون في أنشطتها؟
- إلى أي مدى تتوفر الموارد لتعزيز إدماج الطلاب ذوي الاحتياجات التعليمية الخاصة؟
- هل هناك برامج توعوية للتعلم عن الإعاقة والإدماج كيفية التعامل مع ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة؟ لماذا- لماذا لا؟ أي نوع من برنامج التوعية؟

البعد الثاني: التطوير المهني للموظفين وتوفر الدعم المتخصص.

- الي أي مدى توجد برامج تدريب خاصة لتدريب الموظفون بالمدارس، بما في ذلك المعلمين والمدراء؟
- هل يتلقى معلمات التربية الخاصة التدريب أثناء الخدمة؟ لماذا، كم مرة، أي نوع من التدريب؟
- كيف تصفين العلاقة بين المدرسة وإدارة التربية والتعليم خاصه مشرفات التربية الخاصة من حيث فعالية الاشراف ومراقبة نجاح عملية الدمج وتوفير الدعم الاختصاصي المطلوب؟
- ما هي الاحتياجات المهنية الغير متوفرة والتي تشكل عائقا أمام الدمج الفعال وكيف يمكن التغلب عليها؟ هل تعتبر ذلك عائقا أمام الدمج الناجح ولماذا؟

البعد الثالث: أولياء الأمور ودمج ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة.

- كيف تصفين العلاقة بين المدرسة وأولياء أمور ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة؟ وبعبارة أخرى، ما مدى تعاون أولياء الأمور مع المدرسة ومشاركتهم في تعليم أبنائهم؟ وما هي طرق ذلك؟
- هل تشجع إدارة المدرسة مشاركة الوالدين؟ كيف ولماذا؟
- ما نوع النشاطات التي تقوم بها المدرسة لأولياء الأمور؟

• هل هناك برامج توعوية للآباء والأمهات حول أهمية مشاركتهم في تعليم أطفالهم؟ وماهي

• ما هي العوامل التي تعتقد أنها تساهم في مشاركة أولياء الأمور أو عدم وجودها؟
بما أنك ذكرت الخطة التربوية الفردية، هل يشارك أولياء الأمور في كتابه الخطة الفردية للطالبة؟ لماذا لا يشاركن او لما لا يكون هناك فريق متعدد التخصصات؟
• من وجه نظرك كيف يمكن تعزيز مشاركة الوالدين / بكلمة أخرى كيف تعتقد أن الآباء يمكن تشجيعهم على التعاون بشكل أفضل مع المدرسة وإشراكهم في تعليم أطفالهم؟

لا يوجد لديك: اطلب من غير ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة التوقف عن قبول أقرانهم من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة.
• إلى أي مدى تعتقد أن الطالبات من غير ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة متقبلين لأقرانهم ذوي الاحتياجات التعليمية الخاصة؟
• هل تشجع المدرسة التفاعل بين التلاميذ؟ لماذا / لماذا لا كيف؟
• ما نوع الأنشطة التي تقوم بها المدرسة لتشجيع تفاعل الطالبات من غير ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة مع ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة؟ هل كانت مفيدة؟
• ما هي العوامل التي تعتقد أنها تؤثر على تفاعل الطالبات مع بعض وتقبل بعضهم لبعض؟
• ما هي الاثار الإيجابية او السلبية التي لاحظتيها على الطلاب ذوي الاحتياجات التعليمية الخاصة في مدرستك؟ هل يمكن ان توضح؟ على سبيل المثال، من الناحية الاجتماعية؟
• إلى أي مدى ترى أن الطالبات من غير ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة عائقا أمام نجاح دمج ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة؟
• ما هي الاقتراحات التي ستقدمونها من أجل تحسين الإدماج في مدارسكم؟

Example of Interview Arabic Version

أسئلة المقابلة

الاسم المعلمة: غير مصرح به

المكان: غرفة الصف

الوقت: 11.15

الخلفية /المؤهل العلمي

المؤهل العلمي:

- ☐ دبلوم في التربية الخاصة
- ☐ بكالوريوس في التربية الخاصة √
- ☐ ماجستير في التربية الخاصة.

عدد سنوات الخبرة في تدريس ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة:

- ☐ أقل من خمس سنوات
- ☐ من ٥ – أقل من ١٠ سنوات
- ☐ ١٠ – أقل من ١٥ سنة √
- ☐ من ١٥ فأكثر

الأبعاد المقابلة ترتكز هذه الدراسة في أحد أهدافها على معرفة اتجاهات المعلمين نحو دمج ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة من أربعة نواحي وهي:

1. ثقافة الدمج في المدرسة.
2. التطوير المهني للمعلمين.
3. التعاون أولياء الأمور مع المدرسة ومشاركتهم في عملية التعلم.
4. احتياجات الطالب من غير ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة وقربهم من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة ومدى تفاعلهم مع.
5. اقتراحات وتوصيات.

البعد الأول: مدى تواجد وعي بثقافة الدمج في مدارس الدمج:

• إلى أي مدى تعتقد أن هناك وعي الإدماج في هو مبني على أساس من قبل موظفي المدرسة؟ لماذا؟ كيف؟

الوعي. ينقصنا الوعي والاتجاهات الإيجابية في المدرسة. ينقصنا ثقافه ان الدمج مسؤولية مشتركة وأن معلمات التربية الخاصة والطالبات ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة هم جزء من المدرسة وليس شيء دخيل عليها او مضاف لها. للأسف الدمج في هذه المدرسة دمج مكاني فقط فهم لا يشاركون ولا يدمجون ابدا في الفصل ولا في الحصص الفنية والطبخ وانما فقط في الفناء المدرسي، هو باختصار نقل الطالبات من مدارس التربية الخاصة ووضعهم في فصول في مدارس التعليم العام. فكما ذكرت لك ان أعضاء المدرسة ينقصهم الوعي والمعرفة الكافية بالدمج يحتاجون توضيح ان الدمج يعني ان تعليم ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة مهمة مشتركة بين معلم التربية العامة والخاصة وان الاعتناء بهم وتمكينهم وتعزيز مشاركتهم في كل جوانب المدرسة هو مسؤولية مشتركة بين كل أعضاء المدرسة.

• كيف تصف ردات افعال معلمات التربية العامة والإدارة المدرسية نحو الدمج والطالبات ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة؟

اتجاهاتهم ايجابيه طالما أن الطالبات مسؤوليتنا، أحيانا اعضاء المدرسة وخاصه المعلمات ليسوا مستوعبين أن الطالبات لديهم قدرات بسيطة فهم يتوقعون منهم ان يتصرفوا وينضبطون مثل الطلاب الاصحاء ... من المفترض أنهم ينزلون لنفس مستواهم ويعاملونهم حسب قدراتهم العقلية. ولا اعتقد أن ذلك قلة وعي حيث انه لابد أن يكونوا قد صادفوا اشخاص ذوي اعاقه في مكان اخر سواء في عائلاتهم او أقاربهم او جيرانهم خارج نطاق المدرسة.

بالنسبة لمديره المدرسة كانت في البداية (واقصد في البداية منذ 4 سنوات تقريبا) جيده ومتحمسة وداعمه لنا ولكن مؤخرا بدأ التضييق وعدم التقبل ربما يكون ذلك اكتفاء او ملل لا اعلم، فهي في الاغلب تلبي طلبات واحتياجات معلمات وطالبات التعليم العام ولكن تستثقل طلباتنا واحتياجات طالباتنا.. نعم اعتقد أنه من وجه نظري ملل واكتفاء.

• إلى أي مدى يعمل موظفو المدرسة بشكل تعاوني ويتقاسمون مسؤولية دمج الإدماج والعمل على جعل المدرسة أكثر شمولية؟ كيف ولماذا؟

لا، نحن فقط من يقوم بذلك، دمج الطالبات ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة هي مسؤولية معلمات التربية الخاصة فقط. للأسف تفتقر المدرسة إلى الإحساس بالمسؤولية المشتركة في تدريس ورعاية ودمج الطالبات ذوي الاحتياجات التعليمية الخاصة بل انه يتم اعتبارهم مسؤولية المعلمين الخاصين فقط. وتفتقر المدرسة بشكل كبير إلى الوعي في المقام الأول. السبب الأول هو أن الموظفين لم يدرسوا التربية الخاصة ولم يتلقون التدريب عليه. وثانيا، وكما قلت، فإن دمج وتمكين الطالبات ذوي الاحتياجات التعليمية الخاصة ينظر اليها على أنها مسؤوليتنا فقط، ولهذا السبب لا أحد يفعل أي شيء لتعزيز إدماجهم. أيضا، لا توجد سياسة صارمة وواضحة في المدرسة بحيث توضح أدوار كل عضو من أعضاء المدرسة بحيث تجعلهم يدركون أن ليس فقط مسؤوليتنا ولكن هم ايض جزء أساسي جدا في هذه العملية.

• إلى أي مدى تشجع القيادة المدرسية على الإدماج والعمل على تحقيق نجاحه كيف ولماذا؟

للأمانة هي تحاول قصارى جهدها، كلما كانت تستطيع ولكن لا يزال ينظر إلى الدمج على أنها مسؤوليتنا فقط. على سبيل المثال، تسمح لنا بعمل الأنشطة والمناسبات التي تخص ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة ولكن ليس كثيرا. بصراحة، يجب أن تفعل أكثر من ذلك، على الأقل تطلب من معلمات التربية العامة التعاون معنا والسماح لطالباتهم بالانضمام إلى الأنشطة مع الطلاب ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة، لكن بدلا من ذلك للأسف تقول لا أستطيع إجبار المعلمين على القيام بشيء لا يريدون القيام به، أو حمل عبء تدريسي أكثر.

• هل يتعاون المعلمون العاملون مع المعلمين الخاص لذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة وتشجع شراكتهم؟ كيف، لماذا، لماذا لا؟

الغالبية العظمى لا يتعاونون والمشكلة هي في إيصال الفكرة لمعلمات التربية العامة ان طالبات التعليم الخاص يجب ان يعاملوا معاملة طالبات التعليم العام وان الاهتمام بهم وتعليمهم هي مسؤولية مشتركة، فهم ليسوا مستوعبين انه ممكن ان يكون لديها طالبة من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة عندها في الفصل وأنها تقوم بالتركيز عليها اثنا الشرح بل انهم يعتقدون انها تماما مسؤوليه معلمة التربية الخاصة وأنها كمعلمة تربية عامة غير ملزومة بتعليم هذه الفئة. فمثلا أنا كمعلمة تربية خاصه لا اتواجد في كل الحصص وبناء عليه فإن الطالبة من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة تحت مسؤولية المعلمة العامة ومن المفترض ان تركز عليها وأن تضعها من وأولياتها. ولكن ما يحدث للأسف انني أتفاجأ بان الدفتر والكتاب والتقرير لم يكتب فيه أي شيء وكأن الطالبة لم تكن حاضره في الحصه البتة. على الرغم من انه يتم الاتفاق المسبق معها ويتم التخطيط على توزيع المهام فيما بيننا، الا انه بمجرد خروجي من الفصل كأن شيئا لم يكن. حتى اننا وصلنا لمرحلة انه إذا كانت هناك مشرفه سوف تحضر حصة معينه تقوم المعلمة بإخراج الطالبة من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة الي الفصل الاخر حتى تنتهي الحصه.

وكما قلت، نادرا ما نادرا ما يتعاونون (كيف)، على سبيل المثال، كما قلت لك، حتى في الدورات التي يكون فيها الطلاب معا، والتي هي أساسا جلسات فنية وجلسات الطبخ، والمعلم العام هو المسؤول عنها الطلاب وأنا مسؤول عن طلابي مع سين وبعض الوقت كما قلت لك أنها تخبر الطلاب قبالة إذا جاءوا إلى الطلاب مع الجانب سين بحيث لا شيء ضار يحدث للطلاب مع سين وأنها سوف تكون مسؤولة.

وفي الغالب، لا يرغب المعلمون العامون في أن يكونوا مسؤولين، في وقت ما، يقولون إنهم لا يعرفون كيفية التعامل مع الطلاب ذوي الاحتياجات التعليمية الخاصة لأنهم لا يتلقون أي تدريب. كما تعلمون، حتى لو كان أحد الطلاب يسقط أو بحاجة إلى مساعدة في الملعب على سبيل المثال، فإنها لا تفعل أي شيء ولكن استدعاء المعلمين الخاصة لرؤية طلابنا لأن لديها الآخرين للتعامل مع وأعتقد أن معظمها هو الخوف من الإضرار الطالب أو تسبب لها أي مشكلة. وأيضا، في بعض الأحيان انها بسبب اضافية التي لدي في راتبي. على سبيل المثال، تلك التي أطلب من المعلمين العامين التخطيط للأنشطة المشتركة بين كل من الطلاب، وأنا ببساطة أجاب؛ لديك 30٪ إضافية في راتبك للقيام بذلك.

• هل يشارك الطلاب ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في جميع جوانب المدرسة ويشاركون في أنشطتها؟

لا، ليس حقا. فقط في وقت الفراغ لأن المدرسة لديها فناء واحد فقط والذي يخرج جميع الطالبات اليه في وقت الفسحه ونهاية الدوام الدراسي. ويعتبر تقريبا هذا هو المجال الذي يمكن من خلاله أن نرى تفاعل الطالبات. وفعليا يبدون سعيدين معا ويتفاعلوا معا بشكل جيد فهم يلعبون معا ويساعد بعضهم البعض. أحيانا، أقول لمعلمه التعليم العام للسماح للطلاب بالمجيء والمشاركة في انشطه نقوم بها لطالباتنا وأقول لها هذا سيكون تحت مسؤوليتي. (لماذا) المشكلة ليست من خارج المدرسة مثل السياسة ولكن من داخل المدرسة. أعضاء المدرسة يفتقرون إلى المعرفة وأيضا لا يريدون أي عمل إضافي.

• إلى أي مدى تتوفر الموارد لتعزيز إدماج الطلاب ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة؟

هناك موارد والتي في الغالب نوفرها من قبلنا لان المصادر التي نطلبها من الإدارة تأخذ وقت طويل حتى توفر لنا لذلك نحن نفضل أن نوفرها بأنفسنا وعلى نفقاتنا وللأسف لا زلنا بحاجة إلى الكثير. على سبيل المثال، نحن بحاجة إلى ساحة لعب واسعه وغنيه بالمثيرات التي تفيد الطالبات حيث ان الساحة التي لدينا حاليا صغيرة جدا وغير مهيئ ابدا. طالباتنا نشيطات جدا ويحتاجون إلى مساحة أكبر وهذا الشي بالطبع لا يمكن أن توفر من قبلنا ولكن من قبل وزارة التربية.

• هل هناك برامج توعوية تقام عن الإعاقة والإدماج فيما يتعلق بالتعامل مع ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة؟ لماذا-لماذا لا؟ أي نوع من برنامج التوعية؟

هناك ورش عمل توعوية تتم في معظمها تعقد عن طريق معلمات التربية الخاصة، وفي الاغلب لا تؤخذ على محمل الجد من قبل معلمات التعليم العام. لكن البرامج التي نعقدها في الطابور الصباحي والإذاعة تبدو مفيدة للطالبات. (كيف) على سبيل المثال، في البرنامج إذا كنا نتحدث إلى الأطفال حول مدى أهمية وكيف جيدة إذا كنا نساعد واحترام بعضنا البعض نلاحظ في الفسحة انهم يحاولون مساعدة اقرانهم من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة ونلاحظ تفاعلهم مع بعضها البعض.

البعد الثاني: التطوير المهني للموظفين وتوفير الدعم المخصص:

• إلى أي مدى تتوجه برامج تدريب خاصة لتدريب الموظفون بالمدارس بما في ذلك المعلمين والمدراء؟

ولا يملك المعلمون خلفية او تدريب في التربية الخاصة او العمل مع الطلاب ذوي الاحتياجات التعليمية الخاصة، في بعض الأحيان تذهب مديرة المدرسة الي برامج تدريبية ينظمها مكتب الاشراف ولكن ليس المعلمات. يوجد مجموعة متنوعة من برامج التدريب التي تنظمها مراكز خاصة في أوقات المساء ولكنها ليست مجانية وعليك أن تدفع لحضورها. هذا دفعنا نحن كمعلمات تربية خاصة لعقد عدد من ورش العمل والبرامج التدريبية لمعلمات التعليم العام ولكنها لم تؤخذ على محمل الجد كما ذكرت لك.

وكما ذكرت لك يوجد لدينا معلمات تربية خاصه ولكنهم يتعثرون ويجدون أحيانا صعوبة في تدريس ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة وفي مواكبة متطلبات الدمج ويعود ذلك من وجه نظري الي نقص الخبرة والتدريب المستمر اثناء الخدمة حيث ان اغلبهم حديثي تخرج وينقصهم التدريب فهم طول سنوات الدراسة يأخذون المعلومات نظرية ولم تتاح لهم فرصه التطبيق الا في حدود الأربع أشهر وهي فتره قليله جدا. وللأسف لا يوجد تدريب اثنا الخدمة لهم وهذا ما نطالب به الان. أيضا لا يوجد لدينا مشرفه مقيمة ونحن نحتاج جدا لمشرفه مقيمة لتتابع سير العملية وتقدم النصائح والاقتراحات وتقييم سير العملية التعليمة وتقدم لنا الدعم المهني والمادي بالوسائل وغيره فهي ستكون حلقه الوصل بيننا وبين إدارة التربية الخاصة

- **هل يتم عقد دورات تدريبية خاصة للتدريب أثناء الخدمة؟ لماذا، كم مرة، أي نوع من التدريب؟**

كما ذكرت لك نادرا ما يتم تقديم دورات تدريبية أو ورش العمل لنا ولكن في الغالب عندما تأتي مشرفة التعليم الخاص تعقد اجتماعات معنا وتتحدث عن بعض استراتيجيات التدريس وكيفية تشجيع الدمج ويكون ذلك في شكل نقاش وأيضا قليل ما يكون ذلك مثلا مرتين فقط في السنة. نحن نعتمد في الغالب على ما تعلمناه في الجامعة على الرغم من أنه يختلف جدا عما نمارسه في الميدان. نقص التدريب بالنسبة لنا قد يكون بسبب انهم يعتقدون أنه بما أن لدينا درجة في التعليم الخاص فنحن لسنا بحاجة.

- **كيف تصف تعاون المعلمين في المدرسة وإدارة التربية والتعليم خاصه مشرفات التربية الخاصة من حيث فعالية الاشراف ومرونة نجاح عملية الدمج وتوفير الدعم الاخصائي المطلوب؟**

في هذه المدرسة، الدمج غير متابع من قبل الاشراف بشكل كافي بل انه متروك للجهود الفردية. فمثلا بالمقارنة مع المدرسة التي كنت أعمل بها، في هذه المدرسة مشرف التربية الخاصة لا يأتي باستمرار وبشكل غير كافية. يمكن أن أقول مرتين في السنة فقط. ولكن في مدرستي السابقة المشرف يأتي كل شهر تقريبا، أحيانا كل من المشرفتين العامة والخاصة يأتون إلى المدرسة معا ويحضرون الفصول الدراسية ويقيمون سير العملية التعليمية والمعلمين. أعتقد ان السبب الأساسي هو بعد مسافة المدرسة حيث أن المدرسة الأخرى التي كنت أعمل فيها تقع بجوار مكتب الاشراف مباشرة ولكن هذه المدرسة تبعد ما يقرب من ساعة.

- **ما هي الاحتياجات لم توفرة والتي يشكل عائقا أمام لدمج فعال والتي فيمكن التغلب عليها؟**

توافر أخصائي على سبيل المثال، لدينا طبيب نفسي فقط ولكن ليس لدينا اخصائي نطق وكلام على الرغم من أن غالبية الطلاب لديهم صعوبات في الكلام ويحتاجون وجود هذا الاخصائي. على الرغم من أننا نلاحظ ان نطقهم وحوارهم يتحسن مع الوقت ومع التفاعل مع الأطفال الآخرين ولكن ما زلنا بحاجة إلى معالج النطق. يجب على وزارة التربية والتعليم ضمان أن يكون لكل مدرسة في كل مدرسة لديها برنامج للتضمين المهنيين؛ فإنها تلعب أدوارا مهمة جدا في المدارس. **هل تعتبر ذلك عائقا أمام لدمج الناجح ولماذا؟**

بالطبع، فأعضاء المدرسة غير متدربين وليس لديهم خبره سابقه او معرفه كافيه بالدمج والطالبات ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة، ولا يوجد وعي كافي، وطالبات التربية الخاصة ينظر إليهم على انهم مسؤوليتنا كمعلمات تربية خاصه وبالتالي سنكون في نفس الدائرة إلى الأبد إذا لم يتخذ اجراء مناسب حيال هذه العقبات. (ما رأيك ينبغي القيام به؟) الوعي هو أهم شيء، وينبغي أن تكون هناك برامج توعية من وزارة التعليم والإدارة التربوية هذين الاثنين هما أكثر مسؤولية منا في رفع مستوى الوعي والتدريب وتوضيح أدوار جميع الموظفين في المدرسة.

المحور الثالث

- **كيف تصف تعاون المعلمة وأولياء أمور ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة؟ بعبارة أخرى، ما مدى تعاون أولياء الأمور مع المدرسة وشراكتهم فيما يتعلق بأبنائهم؟ وما هي طرق ذلك؟**

لا بأس بها بعض أولياء الأمور حريصون على متابعة تقدم ابنتهم، ويسألون مع المعلمة عنهم ويتعاونون معهم ولكن الأغلبية لا. وبعضهم يتعاون ويشارك في كثير من الأحيان وبعض منها نرى فقط في بداية العام لا نراها مرة أخرى.

- **هل تشجع إدارة المدرسة مشاركة أولياء الأمور؟ كيف ولماذا؟**

نعم، تساعد الإدارة المدرسية في تنظيم مجالس الأمهات وعلى أيضا سبيل المثال إذا كان لدينا قلق او ملاحظات بشأن طالبة أو إذا كان الطالبة لم تأت إلى المدرسة تتصل الإدارة بالآباء والأمهات وتسأل عن الطالبة.

- **ما نوع النشاطات التي تقوم بها المدرسة لأولياء الأمور؟**

كما ذكرت لك في الاغلب الأنشطة المتواجدة هي مجالس الأمهات واحتفالات الأيام المفتوحة التي يمكن من خلالها أن تأتي الام وتسأل عن ابنتها. هذا لا يعني ان الام او ولي الامر لا يمكنه ان يتواصل مع المدرسة الا في هذه المناسبات ولكن يمكن أن تأتي أي يوم في أي وقت إلى المدرسة متى ما كانوا يريدون أن يسألوا عن أطفالهم.

بالنسبة لي أنا اتواصل مع الوالدين من خلال دفتر ملاحظات الطالبة، فأنا أكتب فيه كل شيء لولي الامر مثل ماذا تعلمت الطالبة في هذا اليوم وما يجب القيام به في المنزل مثل متابعة أو أداء الواجبات المنزلية ممارسة مهارات معينة، البعض يرد كتابيا والبعض الاخر يتصل هاتفيا للاستيضاح. ولكن الأغلبية للأسف يعود في اليوم الآخر مع دفتر الملاحظات كما أرسلت ولم حتى يفتح او يؤخذ بالاعتبار.

- **هل توجد برامج توعوية لأولياء الأمور حول أهمية مشاركتهم في تعليم أطفالهم؟ وما هي؟**

ليست برامج توعوية بحته ولكن اجتماعات ومجالس الأمهات هي في الاغلب بمثابة ذلك. فمثلا فيها تتحدث مديرة المدرسة مع الأمهات حول أهمية مراقبة أطفالهم وتشجيعهم على أداء الواجبات المنزلية وهكذا.

• ما هي العوامل التي تعتقد أن هناك في مشاركة أولياء الأمور أو عدم وجودها؟

يعتمد على خلفيه الاسرة الثقافية ومدى وعيهم فبعض الاسر تهتم فقط بأن ابنتهم تأكل وتشرب وتجلس في المدرسة حيث أن ليس لديهم أي توقعات بأن ابنتهم سوف تتعلم او تتطور بسبب إعاقتها وبناء عليه لا يبذلون أي جهد سواء في التواصل والتعاون مع المدرسة او حتى بذل جهد مع ابنتهم في المنزل. الاغلب من هذه النوعية يأتون من القرى.

والبعض الاخر وهم يكونون الثلاث ارباع من الاسر أفضل من ذلك حيث يتضح لكي كمعلمة من مستوى الطالبة ومن النوت او الواجبات المعطاة لها ان هناك جهد مبذول من الاهل لتطوير ابنتهم والحرص على تقدمها. وأيضا حرصها على التواصل معي كمعلمة والسؤال عما إذا كنت اعتقد كمعلمة ان ابنتهم عملت تطورا ام لا أيضا من خلال حضورهم للندوات والاجتماعات أيضا من خلال الردود في دفتر الملاحظات بعض الأمهات أيضا تكتب بالتفاصيل الدقيقة ماذا فعلت مع الطالبة وماهي الأنشطة التي قامت بها وماهي ملاحظاتها عليها. فمثل هذه الام تساعدني كثير في معرفه ما إذا كانت الطالبة استوعبت ما تعلمته في المدرسة وفيما إذا كان أثر لازال ثابت وتساعدني أيضا في معرفه ماهي الخطوات القادمة او المهارات التالية التي يمكن ان تتعلمها الطالبة التي تقيمها المدرسة لهم يساعدني أيضا في كتابه وتعديل الأهداف التي وضعتها او سوف اضعها للطالبة في الخطة الفردية.

بما أنك ذكرت الخطة التربوية الفردية، هل يشارك أولياء الأمور في كتابه الخطة الفردية للطالبة؟

لا. فنحن كمعلمات التربية الخاصة فقط من يقوم وضعها ويكون الآباء يتفقون وتوقيع وكذلك المشرف الخاص عندما تأتي ترى ذلك وتوقيع عليه. (الا يوجد فريق متعدد التخصصات؟) لا نعلم أنه مثاليا ينبغي أن يكون هناك فريق متعدد التخصصات ولكن في الحقيقة فأن هذا لا يتم. بصراحة منذ ان عملت كمعلمة وأنا من يعمل الخطة الفردية للطالبات ومن ثم اعرضها على الام إذا كانت مهتمة وتوقع من قبل المشرفة. **لماذا لا يشارك اولياء الأمور في الفريق متعدد التخصصات؟** أولا من النادر جدا اجتماع كل هؤلاء الأعضاء واصلا لا اعتقد ان أحد منهم يعتقد أنه من المفترض عليه ان يشارك في ذلك بل انها فقط معلمة التربية الخاصة من يضعها وكما ذكرت لك يساعدني كثيرا ملاحظات الأم وأسئلتها في تحديد ماهي الخطوات القادمة او المهارات التالية التي يجب ان تركز عليها الطالبة.

• **من وجه نظرك كيف يمكن تعزيز مشاركة أولياء الأمور بطريقة أخرى كيف تعتقد أن الآباء يمكن تشجيعهم على القيام بدور أفضل مع المدرسة وبشكل أفضل مع أطفالهم؟**

يحتاج أولياء الأمور ان يدركوا ومدى تأثيرهم على تعلم وتطور بناتهم. أولياء الأمور بحاجة إلى برامج توعية يحتاجون إلى تعليم. وأيضا ربما نحن كمعلمات بحاجة إلى زيادة الفرص التي من خلالها يمكن للأمهات التواصل وبشكل ثري مع المدرسة والحرص على إشراكهم في تعلم أبناءهم وأن يدركوا ويقتنعوا أن أطفالهم لديهم القدرة على التعلم. كما يجب على وزارة التربية والتعليم الحرص على تعليم أولياء الأمور وذلك بإنشاء منظمات ومراكز أسرية من خلالها يستطيع أولياء الأمور اكتساب المعرفة وتبادل الخبرات فيما يمكن ان يقدوا لأبنائهم مثل برامج التدخل المبكر. لا يوجد في السعودية أي مركز لتعليم أولياء الأمور على الاطلاق.

الجزء الرابع: الطالب دون سن وظائف العمل والمواقف ومستوى القبول:

• **إلى أي مدى تعتقد أن الطلبات من غير ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة تتقبلين أن زملائهم ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة؟**

الطلاب متقبلين جدا، يساعدون اقرانهم من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة ويلعبون معهم، لكن كما ذكرت لك إنهم لا يحصلون دائما على فرصة كافيه من معلميهم. فهم فقط يلتقون في وقت الفراغ وفي هذا الوقت أستطيع ان الاحظ انهم منسجمين ويتفاعلون بشكل جيد للغاية. فمثلا طالباتنا من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة يقلدون أقرانهم من غير ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في طريقة المشي مثلا، وطريقه الكلام، وحتى في الطريقة التي يسرحون بها شعرهم وحتى طريقه حمل حقائبهم.

• **هل تشجع المدرسة تفاعل الطلبات من غير ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة؟ لماذا/ لماذا لا؟**

نعم المدرسة تشجع بالطبع ما نقوم به، ولكن في نفس الوقت لا يساعدون في عمل او تنظيم هذه الأنشطة وفي نفس الوقت قد ينظمون ويتحمسون لعقد أنشطة لطالبات التعليم العام. ما أعنيه هو ان المدرسة لا تمانع في ان نعمل أنشطة ولكن لا تساعد في ذلك. في نفس الوقت أنشطة طالبات التعليم العام بالنسبة لهم اهم وأولى.

• **ما نوع الأنشطة التي تتفق وهل المدرسة تشجع تفاعل الطلبات من غير ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة مع ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة؟ هل كان تعاونية؟**

من الأنشطة التي نقوم بها حن معلمات التربية الخاصة على سبيل المثال، أنشأنا ناد أطلقنا عليه اسم (أصدقاء الطالبات ذوي الاحتياجات التعليمية الخاصة) ندعو فيه اقرانهم من غير ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة إلى إقامة صداقات مع أقرانهم من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة وهذه الصداقة تتضمن اعمال مثل المساعدة في الأنشطة الصفية، خارج المدرسة إلى الحافلة وهكذا. ثم يتم إعطاء الطالبات المشاركات في هذا النادي جوائز أمام المدرسة بأكملها بحيث أشكرهم على مساعدة أقرانهم، وفي الوقت نفسه لتشجيع الآخرين على القيام بذلك. في رأيي، أعتقد أن هذه المبادرة نجحت بنسبة 99٪ في بناء وتشجيع الصداقة والتعاون بين الطلاب والقبول بالطبع.

• **ما هي العوامل التي تعتقد أن هناك تؤثر في تفاعل الطلبات مع بعض بقبل بعض منهم؟**

اعتقد ان الوقت عامل مهم. (كيف؟) ما اعنيه هو انه مع مرور الوقت يعتاد الطالبات على بعضهم البعض. فمثلا في البداية كانت الطالبات من غير ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة يخافون ويبكون لأنهم كانوا يخافون من الطالبات من ذوي الاحتياجات لخاصه. ولكن مع الوقت اعتادوا على بعضهم البعض. أيضا الذي يفيد وبشكل كبير جدا اعتقد انها الأنشطة التي نقوم بها لتشجيع تفاعلهم كما ذكرت لك نادي أصدقاء ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة.

• ما هي الآثار الإيجابية او السلبية التي لاحظتي ها على الطالب ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في مدرستك؟ هل يمكن ان توضح؟ على سبيل المثال، من الناحية الاجتماعية؟

بصراحة لا يمكن لأحد ان ينكر أن الدمج أفاد كلا من الطالبات من ذوي والاحتياجات الخاصة وأيضا اقرانهم من غير ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة. (كيف؟) طالباتنا أصبحن أكثر ثقة بأنفسهن ويمكنهم وأكثرا جراءه الان ويستطيعون ان يتحدثوا عن أنفسهم بعد ان كانوا في عزلة وخجل وانطواء. أيضا، حديثهم ولغتهم تطورت كثيرا. على سبيل المثال، أحد الطالبات سابقا لم أكن قادرة على فهم ما تقول، ولكن الآن خطابها أكثر وضوحا وفمها، وتستخدم الكلمات التي يستخدمها صديقاتها من التعليم العام. أيضا أصبحوا أكثر هدوء وانتظاما فهم سابقا كانوا نوعا ما فوضويين ويصرخون ولا يلتزمون بالطابور الصباحي ولكن الآن يتصرفون أفضل حتى من أقرانهم من غير ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة.

• هل أي مدى ترى أن الطالبات من غير ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة عائقا أمام نجاح دمج ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة؟

لا يشكلون عائقا بصراحة، ولكن كما قلت لك، فإن المعلمات الذين يمنعون تفاعلهم هو ما اعتبره عائقا.

• ما هي الاقتراحات التي ستقدمون ها من أجل تحسين الإدماج في مدارسكم؟

نحن بحاجة إلى رفع وعي جميع أعضاء المدرسة. ونحن بحاجة أيضا إلى دورات تدريبية للمعلمين سواء التربية العامة وأيضا معلمات التربية الخاصة. وأعتقد أيضا أن أولياء الأمور بحاجه ماسه إلى برامج مراكز توعوية يتعلمون عن احتياجات أطفالهم وكيفية مساعدتهم وتعزيز تعلمهم والتي فيها أيضا يمكن أن يجتمع أولياء الأمور مع بعضهم وتبادلون المعرفة والخبرات التي تساعدهم في تطوير ابناءهم.

Example of Interview - English Translated Version

Semi-structured Interview Schedule

Interviewee: (T9. C. D)

Location: meeting room at school

Time: 11:15

District / City: Central/ Buraidah

Special Needs Qualifications:

- ❑ Diploma in special education
- ❑ Bachelor in special education √
- ❑ Masters in special education

Number of years of experience in teaching students with SEN:

- ❑ Less than 5 years
- ❑ 5- Less than 10 years
- ❑ 10- Less than15 years √
- ❑ 15 or more

Interview dimensions:

The first dimension: inclusive culture of the school (including inclusive values, attitudes, practice, staff relationships, collaboration)

- **How is inclusion understood and practised by staff in your school? Why/How?**

Well, actually they know inclusion as a concept because this is not new anymore, but it is inappropriately understood or at least practised (**How?**). Inclusion in this school is just locational - I mean they are in separate classes. They [school staff] believe that inclusion and students with SEN and all the matters related to them are the responsibility of special education teachers only (**Why do you think that?**). Mainly I think it is owing to a lack of awareness and insufficient knowledge of what inclusion really means and that it enables students with SEN to participate in all the aspects of school life and that

teaching, caring and enabling them to achieve their potential is a shared responsibility of all the staff and not only our [special education teachers] responsibility, the awareness and knowledge about inclusion and students' particular needs are very limited. In this school, inclusion means little more than students with SEN existing separately along with the teachers who are responsible for them.

- **How would you describe the attitudes of teachers and head teacher towards inclusion and students with SEN?**

Generally, teachers and head teachers are fine with students being included and they have no problem with them (students with SEN) because, as I said, they are our [special education teachers'] responsibility and because they believe that they don't have to share this responsibility and therefore don't mind students with SEN being in the school. This changes once there is something that they need to be part of or need to do; for example, when there is an activity where both the typically developing students and students with SEN are together, such as art sessions, general education teachers do nothing to encourage interaction and collaboration between the different students, even though it is an art session, which is probably the most suitable occasion for students to work and have fun together. Can you believe it, she tells the typically developing students off when they come to the table where the students with SEN are sitting to give or take colours (**Why do you think that?)** it is just not to take responsibility if anything happens to students with SEN.

- **To what extent do school staff work collaboratively to promote inclusion of students with SEN? How/Why?**

Not really, it's only us [special education teachers], inclusion and students with SEN are special education teachers' responsibility only. The school lacks the awareness and the sense of shared responsibility for teaching and looking after students with SEN, rather than viewing them as the special education teachers' sole responsibility.

The reason for not collaborating, I think is first, the staff neither study special education nor do they have training in it. Second, as I said, inclusion and students with SEN are believed to be our responsibility only; that's why nobody does anything to enhance inclusion apart from us.

- **To what extent does school leadership encourage inclusion and work towards its effective implementation? How/Why?**

She (the head teacher) tries her best whenever she can, but she still views inclusion as our responsibility. For example, she allows activities and events in the school but not very much. Honestly, she should be doing more, like at least asking general education teachers to collaborate and allow typically developing students to join activities with students with SEN, but instead she says, "I can't force teachers to do something they don't want to do, or impose extra duties on them".

- **Do general education teachers collaborate with you in teaching students with SEN and encouraging their participation? How/Why?**

As I said, they rarely collaborate (**Can you give more explanation?**). I mean, for example, even in the sessions in which both students are together, which are mainly the art sessions and cooking sessions, the general education teacher is responsible for her students and I am responsible for my students with SEN, and all the paperwork that the students need, even the paperwork is the same, she prints for the typically developing students only and I print for the students with SEN. So, mostly, general education teachers don't want to be responsible. Actually, "we neither have studied special education nor do we have training in it", is the pretext of general education teachers to not collaborate in every activity that we plan. You know, even if one of the students falls or needs help in the playground, for example, they don't do anything but call special education teachers to see to our students because she has others to deal with.

- **Do students with SEN take part in all aspects of the school and participate in its activities? How/why?**

No, not really, only in the break times, because the school has one hall, so everyone goes to it at break time. That was the only time I would see students interact and you know they look happy and are interacting well together. They play and help each other. Sometimes I just tell the general education teacher to allow the students to come and participate in the activity and I tell her this will be under my supervision (responsibility).

Teachers do not want any additional work and, again, planning and conducting activities for students with SEN is seen as our responsibility. So, if students with SEN are to be included in any event, for example, special education teachers have to plan, prepare and conduct the activity themselves.

- **Are resources available to promote inclusion of students with SEN?**

There are resources, which are mostly provided by us [special education teachers]. The materials that we ask for from the management take ages to come, so we prefer to bring them ourselves at our own expense and we still need a lot. For example, the school's environment is not prepared. It is very old and too small, we need a prepared playground. This playground is very small and has nothing for the students. Our students are very active and need a bigger playground with facilities that benefit the students. Something like that can't be provided by us but by the MoE.

- **Are there awareness programmes to learn about inclusion and students with SEN in your school? Why/ why not? What kind of awareness programme?**

Yes, there are awareness workshops which are mostly conducted by the special education teachers, and they aren't taken very seriously by the general education teachers and head teachers, but probably I think the awareness programmes that we do in the morning talk seem most beneficial for the typically developing students. For example, in the programme, if we talk to the children about how important and how good it is if we help and respect each other, we notice that in the break time they are trying to help each other, playing and interacting.

Second Dimension: Staff Professional Development and Access to Specialist Support:

- **To what extent are there special education training programmes for school staff, including the general education teachers and head teacher?**

The general education teachers and the head teacher do not have a special education background, and are not trained to work with students with SEN. (**Do they receive in- service special education training**?) No, in the school there are no training courses being offered for them. Sometimes the head teacher goes to the head teachers' training programmes in the LEA, but not the teachers. There are a variety of training

programmes arranged by special centres, like in the evening times, but it's not free and you have to pay to attend.

- **Do you, as special education teachers, receive in-service training, how often and what kind of training?**

As I told you, we are rarely offered a training course or workshops, but mostly when the special education supervisor comes, she conducts meetings for us and talks about some teaching strategies, IEPs, special education activities and how to engage students, and manage the classrooms, and eventually encourage inclusion in the form of discussion, but it's like only twice a year. We mostly depend on what we have learnt at the university, although it is different to the theory and texts are not like what you actually practise and face in the field. **(Why you think no sufficient training is being offered?)** I think we are not offered training courses because they (the LEA) think that, since we have a degree in special education, we don't need training, but in fact we really do need it because for inclusion to be effective, on-going training programmes for both us (special education teachers) and for other staff should be provided.

- **How would you describe the relationship between school and special supervisors in the LEA in terms of monitoring inclusion and providing specialist support?**

In this school, the process of inclusion is not monitored and is just left to the efforts of individuals. Compared to the school in which I was working before, in this school we have insufficient supervisor support. The special supervisor comes, like, I would say twice a year only, but in my previous school the supervisor came nearly every month. Sometimes both general and special supervisors came to the school together and attended classes and assessed teachers. The reason, I think, is mainly the school's distance, as the other school in which I was working is right next to the LEA, and the special education supervisor regularly came to the school monitoring, supervising, advising and guiding the teachers. This school is more than an hour away from the LEA and I could say she [special education supervisor] come only two times this year.

- **What professional assistance do you think is lacking and therefore poses an obstacle to effective inclusion and how can it be overcome?**

We don't have a residential special supervisor. The residential special supervisor who visits us is based in another school and only visits us from time to time. She is really important to refer to at any time if she was based in our school. There are also other specialists, for example, we have only a psychologist, but we don't have a speech therapist, even though the majority of students have speech difficulties. Although we notice their speech improves with time and with interacting with other children, we still need a speech therapist, especially as we have deaf students, they need them the most. The MoE should provide the required specialist to each inclusive school based on the needs of the students; for example, since we have deaf students along with other students with SEN, essential professionals like speech therapists are required. The Ministry of Education should ensure that every school should have professionals as they play very important roles in schools. (**Do you consider this as a barrier to successful inclusion and why?)** Of course, staff are not trained, knowledge is not sufficient, students are kept separate, so we will be in the same circle forever if nothing is done. **(What do you think should be done?)**. Awareness is the most important thing, there should be awareness programmes from the MoE and the LEA. These two are the ones who are more responsible than us for raising awareness, training and clarifying the roles of all the staff in the school and ensuring that every single inclusive school has the required professionals, materials, training and appropriate supervision if inclusion is to be effective.

The Third Dimension: Involvement of parents of students with SEN with school:

- **How would you describe the relationship between the school and the parents? In other words, to what extent do parents collaborate with the school and get involved in their children's education? And in what ways?**

The relationship between school and parents is fine. We have some contact with parents, like some of the parents are keen on following their children's progress and therefore some come to the school or phone the school up to ask teachers about their children, but the majority don't. Some of them collaborate and get involved frequently and some of them we only see at the beginning of the year and we never see them again.

- **Does the school management encourage parents' involvement? How?**

Yes. For example, it arranges parents' meetings and, if we have concerns about a student or if the student has not come to school, they contact the parents and ask about the student.

- **What kind of activities does the school arrange for parents?**

As I told you, we do parents' meetings and open days in which parents can come and ask about their children and also parents can come any day, at any time, to the school if they want to ask about their children.

For me, I contact the parents through the students' red notebooks and I write in them everything that the student has learnt that day and what should be done at home, like following up or doing homework and practising certain skills, but only a few parents reply to me and write what the student has done so far at home, whereas the majority come back the next day with the notebook as it was.

- **Are there awareness programmes for parents about the importance of their involvement in their children's education?**

We do try to raise awareness through parents' meetings, like the head teacher and some teachers talking to parents about the importance of monitoring their children and encouraging them to do homework and that sort of thing.

- **What factors do you think contribute to parents' involvement or lack of it?**

The educational level is the first thing. And they rely totally on us in everything related to the child's education, mostly because parents do not believe that their involvement will do anything for their daughter. For example, once in a parents' meeting I gave the mother a copy of the student's IEP to sign and asked whether or not they agreed with the plan. The mother told me "You know her level and what she needs, so do what you think is good for her". Also, some parents just don't believe their children can learn. I mean, the mother thinks her involvement in her children's education or following her up at home won't make any difference to the fact that the child is disabled. (**So, parents are not involved in forming the IEP from the beginning?)** No, it's only me, I form it and have the parents agree and sign, as well as the special supervisor - when she comes she sees it and signs it. (**So, no multidisciplinary team is involved?**) No, we know that there should be a multidisciplinary team, ideally, but it has never been put

into practice. I mean this has only ever been done by me, and reviewed by the supervisor and signed by the parents afterwards.

- **How could parents' involvement be enhanced? In other words, how do you think parents could be encouraged to collaborate more with the school and get involved in their children's education?**

Parents need to understand their importance and their influence over their children's education. They need awareness programmes and education.

We probably need to increase the opportunities for parents to come to school and get involved in the students' learning and see that their children have the potential to learn. Also, the MoE - or at least the LEA - should educate parents and establish parents' organisations to which parents could go, learn and exchange knowledge and experience. They don't have any of this at the moment, which is not helping at all.

Fourth dimension: typically developing students and their interactions with students with SEN:

- **How would you describe the attitude of typically developing students towards their peers with SEN and their interactions with them?**

They actually do accept them, help them and play with them. They are getting on well together but, as I told you, they are not always given the chance by their teachers. But in the break times we see them in the hall, interacting very well. They imitate their typically developing peers in the way they walk, talk and even in the way they do their hair and the way they hold their bags.

- **Does the school encourage both students' interaction? Why/why not? How?**

Yes, they encourage what we do ourselves. I mean, the head teacher does not mind us doing activities for both students, but at the same time the school does activities for all the students, but not specifically for students with SEN because it is, as I said, perceived as our responsibility.

- **What kind of activities has the school arranged to get both students to interact? Were they useful?**

We created a club that we called Friends of Students with SEN in which we invited typically developing peers to establish friendships with peers who have SEN and this friendship included something like helping in class activities, looking after her when getting out of the school to the bus and that sort of thing. The students involved in this club were then given prizes in front of the entire school so as to thank them for helping their peers with SEN and at the same time to encourage others to do the same. In my view, I think this initiative was 99% successful in building and encouraging friendship and collaboration between students and of course acceptance.

- **What factors you think influence the students' attitudes and interactions?**

Time. I think with time they get used to each other, because at the beginning they used not to accept the students with SEN, but with time they get used to each other. Also, the activities we do to get them to interact and in which we award prizes to the students who are being helpful to their peers with SEN, these help a lot and I think they encourage students' interactions, mostly because they like to win awards.

- **From your experience and daily observation of students, what effects does inclusion have on students with special educational needs in your school?**

All students – to be honest- both typically developing students and their peers with SEN - benefit from inclusion. For example, students with SEN used to be quiet and isolated, whereas now almost every student has a friend from general education. Also, socially, they develop a number of social skills and they have become more confident and more independent. For example, one of the students with SEN used to shout when she spoke and did not listen to anyone, hit others and scream at them, but now she is 100% improved and has become quieter and now she sometimes behaves better than other typically developing peers.

- **To what extent do you see peers' acceptance and interaction as barriers to effective inclusion?**

They are not a barrier. But, as I told you, not giving both students the opportunity to interact is the barrier.

- **What suggestions would you make for improving inclusion in your school?**

We need awareness workshops for all the staff. We also need training courses for general education teachers and for us as well. Also, I think parents need awareness programmes or institutions in which they can learn about their children's needs and how to help them and enhance their learning, and in which they can meet other parents and exchange knowledge and experiences.